

THE GUAYATE, BELOW JUTECALPA.



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# EXPLORATIONS AND ADVENTURES IN HONDURAS,

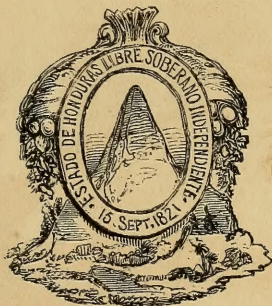
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COMPRISING

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN THE GOLD REGIONS OF OLANCHO,  
AND A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND GENERAL RESOURCES OF  
**Central America.**

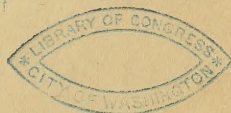
WITH ORIGINAL MAPS, AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY WILLIAM V. WELLS.



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TO

CORNELIUS K. GARRISON, ESQ.,

TO WHOSE COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISE IS DUE A LARGE SHARE OF THE  
PRESENT FACILITIES FOR OCEAN NAVIGATION BETWEEN  
THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC STATES,

*This Volume is respectfully Inscribed.*





## P R E F A C E.

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THE journey of which the following pages form a diary, afterward somewhat elaborated by facts collected in Honduras, was conceived in California in 1853, and based upon reliable information, which since 1851 had been placed at my disposal, regarding the gold regions of Central America. Its principal object was a reconnoissance of that part of the republic of Honduras known as Olancho, which in 1850 had been visited by a gentleman now residing in New York, and by him, on his return, represented to be "another California," equaling the new El Dorado in auriferous deposits, and excelling it in position and accessibility.

The advantages of this country had for some time been the theme of discussion. From the limited information that could be collected in San Francisco, and the papers in my possession, it appeared that on the head-waters of the streams taking their rise in the mountains of Honduras and falling into the Caribbean Sea—particularly the Guayape or Patook—there were deposits of gold (placers) in every way similar to those of California; that these were accessible by a navigable river, the mouth of which was within three days steaming of New Orleans and seven of New York; that the climate of this region, although in the tropics, was equable and salubrious; that the government had manifested a favorable disposition toward foreign enterprises; and that, in addition to its mineral wealth, the country teemed with valuable woods and drugs, and produced spontaneously all the tropical staples.

At that time gold had been discovered at several unexpected points throughout the world. In Australia, Oregon, Peru, and Sonora, the adventurous miner, nerved to activity by the example of California, had struck the golden deposits, and in the two

first instances with a success rivaling California itself. The era of gold that had apparently dawned upon the world, swelling the amount produced from \$50,000,000 to the startling sum of \$200,000,000 annually, and coming from regions until then unknown to merchants and geographers, led to the reflection that similar deposits might exist in Honduras, which in past centuries had been known as gold-bearing, and was now the field of Indian labors, conducted with the rude implements of a semi-civilized race.

Neither books nor maps relating to Honduras could at that time be found in California. The able work of Mr. E. G. Squier on Nicaragua, so admired for its delightful narrative style and valuable ethnological facts, had been with difficulty obtained; but that author had not then made his second visit to Central America, and consequently the valuable information he has since given to the world on Honduras had not been published. The works and maps of English and other foreign writers on Central America had never reached the Pacific coast—even their names were unknown. But, had these been accessible, they would have proved useless as guides, owing to their authors' ignorance of the country I proposed to visit, particularly of Eastern Honduras and the extensive section drained by the Guayape. This river, in some maps, even as late as 1855, is made a tributary of the Roman or Aguan, discharging into the Caribbean Sea near Truxillo, when it is actually the Patook itself, but bearing in the interior a distinct name. The topography of the country seems to have been thrown in hap-hazard to fill up unsightly blanks in maps of which only the coast-lines, in some instances, were correct, a circumstance due to the accurate Admiralty surveys. In fact, as I afterward ascertained, Honduras was as much a *terra incognita* as the interior of Japan.

The accompanying map of Eastern Honduras is the result of no little labor, and, though not embracing a very extended space of territory, corrects the absurd blunders appearing in all preceding ones of Olancho. The distances between the principal towns and haciendas and their location I generally ascertained from personal observation, assisted by the information readily accorded me by the most intelligent residents. No map from actual survey, to my knowledge, has ever been made of this se-



cluded country, except a rude and incorrect one, sent, in 1851, to Señor Rugame, of Nacaome, by a native of Truxillo, who had formed a rough tracing of Olancho for the purpose of locating certain government grants of land on which to prosecute mahogany-cutting. The few interior towns introduced toward the line of the proposed inter-oceanic rail-road are according to the map of Mr. E. G. Squier. Should Olancho hereafter become the field of extended scientific surveys, there will be found, I think, but few errors in the present map, and such as an unaided and inexperienced traveler could scarcely avoid committing.

On leaving California, I had no other view than to report to a number of gentlemen in San Francisco, who had become interested in my proposed enterprise of procuring from the government of Honduras the right to work gold placers, and to establish commercial stations for the export of hides, timber, dye-woods, and other valuables, by the River Guayape or Patook, from the department of Olancho. But, upon considering how little was then known of Honduras, I determined, after my arrival, in addition to the duties I had specified for myself, to devote some part of every day to a diary or journal of passing events, embracing the peculiarities of character and customs, and the general occurrences of travel among a primitive and secluded people.

With this view, during nearly a year's travel, extending over a thousand miles, mostly on mule-back, and visiting in that time thirty-eight Central American towns and settlements, I collected every thing that seemed likely to shed any light upon the history and natural resources of the country. Coins, portraits, botanical, mineralogical, and ornithological specimens; pamphlets of every description, thrown off during fifty years by the local presses; old books, *gacetas*, *diarios*, and manuscripts, and a series of drawings executed by Señor Laso, of Tegucigalpa, who accompanied me into Olancho, enabled me, on my return, to throw together facts enough to warrant their embodiment in the form of a printed volume. Some of my most interesting portraits, maps, and views of scenery, I have unfortunately mislaid, and these can not be accurately replaced.

The historical and political part, p. 449-522, embodies some facts hitherto unpublished, and is presented simply as a brief

sketch of this interesting portion of the continent from the discovery to the present day, without aspiring to the dignity of a history. The Spanish historians have been consulted in chapter xxiii., as well as several more modern writers, in relation to the Spanish colonial government. As has been observed by an English author, "So little of the internal history of Honduras has been handed down to us through the dark ages of the Spanish dominion, that the few facts we can glean by the glimmering and suspicious light which the corsairs have afforded us serve rather as milestones of their existence than as details of events connected with their fate."

The so-called mystery enveloping the kingdom of Guatemala after the establishment of the Spanish colonial system, extending uninterruptedly through the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and into the 19th, has been partially dissipated by the historian of the country, Juarros, from whom I have made occasional extracts. This work, originally published in Guatemala in 1811, in nine volumes, and subsequently abridged by its author, is but little known in the United States, where it seems to be confined to the libraries of Spanish scholars. Probably less is known of the early history of Guatemala than of any other Spanish American country. The investing of that strange and wondrous overrunning of a nation by Alvarado and a handful of mailed followers with the graces of an Irving or Prescott has yet to be accomplished. The field, immense as it is, and opening, through the dusty pages of the old Spanish authors tales of chivalric deeds long forgotten, is perhaps the most inviting left to the modern historian.

The groundwork of the events detailed in chapters xxiv.-v. I have obtained from the brief historical sketch by Mr. R. G. Dunlop, in his "Travels in Central America," where he presents a political resumé extending from 1821 to 1847. The interesting chapters by Mr. E. G. Squier, apparently drawn from the same source, and Marure and Montufar, present these facts in a more significant and systematic form. The principal historical facts, however, I obtained in Honduras from manuscripts and official papers, most of which are still in my possession, and the verbal narrations of persons taking prominent parts in the revolutions. The historical sketch in "The Gos-

pel in Central America" has also been consulted. This, as its author, Mr. Crowe, states, is based upon Mr. Dunlop's chapters on that subject.

There has been devoted, perhaps, unmerited space to the events connected with the history and death of Morazan. These pages, however, are but a small portion of the manuscripts placed in my hands by his son-in-law, Don Estevan Travieso, of Tegucigalpa; and it is owing to my promise at that time to publish a brief summary of their contents that I was first induced to prepare the political sketch.

The narrative of adventures, as I have observed, is simply a transcript of my diary, which was kept without a day's intermission. This, in the solitudes through which the traveler must pass, served rather as an agreeable occupation than a task. Only desultory selections could be made from it in forming the present volume. But few pages have been devoted to Nicaragua, as a country more familiar to the general reader, and Olancho (the object of my expedition) has been reached as quickly as possible. In speaking of this part of my journey, I can only repeat what has already been said in the articles arranged from my notes and recently published in Harper's Magazine. Imagine the vegetable and mineral wealth of New England and Virginia intensified tenfold; the same genera of plants and trees, American in tint and physiognomy; our own northern June greens and September browns alternating with the same familiar evergreen tints, but firmer, richer, and more varied and expanded in every way. It is the New World at its best—its summit of beauty and utility. The aphorism of Lord Bacon, that knowledge is power, and by converse, that ignorance is weakness, exemplifies itself in the ignorance of the American people regarding the real character of the interior of tropical America. Since my return, I have frequently noticed summer scenery in Massachusetts, particularly between Brighton and Cambridge, of which I remembered Olancho as the glowing counterpart, but far excelling the northern picture in softness and delicacy of outline.

In relation to this, one feels a hesitation in describing scenes of such rare beauty, and is tempted not so much to give his picture the *couleur de rose* as to bare it of its legitimate beauty,



lest the reader smile, incredulous of what goes so far beyond the experience of ordinary life. As the multitude take the expression of something they have never felt for an absurdity, so the description of what they have never seen appears ridiculous and overdrawn, especially if it should be at all calculated to "stroke the prejudices the wrong way."

The intimacy which steam navigation has established between the United States and Spanish America, and the increasing interest taken in those countries, which until recently have been comparatively excluded from the world, point out the American tropics as destined, at no distant time, to become a prominent field of enterprise. Until lately, the constantly-reproduced quotations from gazetteers and encyclopædias have been the main sources of information regarding Honduras—a state, in all probability, to become a highway of nations across the continent and the source of great mineral wealth. As yet, the country sits enthroned in silence and solitude, apparently only to be broken by the advance of foreign civilization and industry.

New York, November 5, 1856.

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7°

# MAP OF EASTERN HONDURAS,

*showing the*

## *GOLD AND SILVER REGIONS*

*of*  
**Olanchito & Tegucigalpa;**

*AND*

## THE VALLEY OF THE GUAYAPE,

BY WILLIAM V. WELLS.

1857.

16°



# EXPLORATIONS IN HONDURAS.

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## CHAPTER I.

Objects of the Journey to Olancho.—Departure from California.—San Juan del Sur.—New York Passengers.—The Road to Virgin Bay.—Scenery.—Climate.—Ometepe.—Storm on Lake Nicaragua.—New Acquaintances.—The War.—Departure for Rivas.—Lake Nicaragua.—Rio Lejas.—Crossing a Quick-sand.—Night in the Woods.—A tropical Thunder-storm.—Rivas.—A moonlight Ramble.—“*Quien vive?*”

EARLY in 1854, I left San Francisco, California, to visit Central America, for the purpose of obtaining certain mining and commercial privileges from the government of Honduras. The enterprise, originating with a New York merchant, had passed from hand to hand, until the papers and documents connected with it had found their way to California, where the broad liberality and eager spirit of adventure at that date seemed to offer a more genial soil for the inception of such projects.

The time was considered as peculiarly favorable for successful negotiation with the people of Central America, and especially with those of Honduras, the government of which state had dispatched one of its most eminent citizens to the United States with the view of opening the country to American immigration, a course then thought likely to advance its social and commercial interests.

I was fortunate in obtaining letters of introduction from several Central Americans to some of the leading citizens of Honduras, as well as a package of similar papers from the Hon. Henry S. Foote, Hon. Ogden Hoffman, Jr., Governor Bigler, of California, and several other national and state officers, which enabled me to look forward with pleasure and confidence to my journey.

With these, and the imperfect information I could obtain from the few books relating to Central America at that time access-



ible in California, I embarked in the steamer Cortez, and, bidding adieu to the little knot of friends on the wharf, the expression of whose sincere wishes for my success was long impressed with pleasure on my memory, we glided out of the noble harbor, and were soon plowing the blue waters of the Pacific. With occasional glimpses of the coast, now gliding by the shadowy outlines of inland mountains, or skirting the grassy headlands of Mexico and Guatemala, we entered, on the thirteenth day, the little harbor of San Juan del Sur, our first experience of Central American peculiarities of climate being a tempestuous rain-squall, a significant foretaste of what might be expected for the future.

Thanks to the attention of our courteous commander, our two weeks of steam-boat life had been little else than a pleasure-trip, the too speedy conclusion of which we rather regarded with regret. From our position on the quarter-deck we could observe the general appearance of the town, and the tropical scenery of eternal green beyond. The *foreign* appearance of the picture was somewhat marred by the familiar architecture of the principal houses, and the very un-Spanish oaths and activity attending the bustle of debarkation.

A swarm of dusky natives in bongos mingled their broken English with the gruff and business-like tones of the habitual New York boatman, in the noisy competition for "fares." We waited for the rush to subside, and then quietly seating ourselves, with Captain Cropper, in the steamer's boat, pulled for the shore, along which a white crest of foam sparkled and dashed with a gentle murmur peculiarly soothing after the monotonous rattle of the engine, and the endless variety of noises marking the passage of a steam-ship filled with Americans.

The rainy season was now at its height, and in four hours we had as many squalls, attended with thunder and lightning. Under these circumstances, prepared as I was for every novelty in scenery and character, I cared little about making accurate notes of a place which every California traveler has passed through, and whose novel events have been for years the theme of newspaper comment.

We landed astride the backs of negroes, and our first salutation on reaching the shores of Central America was from a bare-

legged, half-naked negro soldier, whose dingy exterior could be only paralleled in ludicrous effect by the rusty English musket with which he strutted along the line of surf. My first care was to seek a lodging-house, and the Pacific Hotel appearing the most promising, we wended our way thither, our baggage following us on the backs of three or four natives, who demanded a real each for their services.

By 10 A.M. the passengers, numbering some six hundred, had mounted, and were en route, over the company's road, for Virgin Bay; and, standing in the balcony of our hotel, we waved adieus to the many acquaintances we had made on board, until, the last disappearing, we had our trunks carried up and were soon duly installed in our quarters. Habit, in years past, among the South Americans, had acquainted me with the use of the hammock, so that it seemed no strange thing to drop into one of these swinging comforts, and, with the help of an excellent cigar (a remnant of San Francisco), to dream away an hour, lulled by the soothing rustle of the surf, and drowsily speculating upon the duties of the expedition.

Our host, Mr. Priest, soon made our acquaintance, and, learning our destination, advised us by no means to attempt reaching the northern part of the state by land, while the lake, being infested with the cruisers of the Chamorro party, was a dangerous passage for foreigners, especially Americans, many of whom, having joined the Liberal or Castellon party, were henceforth the special objects of the enemy's vengeance: it was even asserted that Chamorro had issued orders to his subordinates to give no quarter to Americans in or out of the service of the opposite cause. The country from San Juan to Masaya was in the hands of the Castellon party, but, beyond that point, we should come into the vicinity of Granada, the stronghold of Chamorro. Mr. Priest advised us to await the arrival of a coasting schooner daily expected from Punta Arenas, and bound to Realejo.

While we were conversing with our loquacious host, we were joined by two gentlemen, evidently foreigners, who, as we afterward learned, were sons of Don Carlos Dardano, of Amapala, Tigre Island, to whom I had letters of introduction. These young men had been waiting alternately at San Juan and Virgin Bay for several weeks, in company with Mr. Henry Matsell,

lately appointed consul to La Union in San Salvador. Mr. Matsell was unwilling to venture with his family through the country or by the lake, and now, driven to desperation, was negotiating for the repair of a decayed long-boat turned bottom up upon the beach, in which to embark with his household gods for Realejo, where he was assured of hospitable entertainment and a reasonable amount of comforts.

The lady who at this moment joined us, in company with a dark-eyed little girl, seemed already wearied with her few weeks of Nicaraguan life. She complained of languor and debility, the effects of which are sure to mark themselves upon the female visitor who remains under the enervating influence of the tropical sun.

After a long consultation, in which the Dardanos urged us to remain with them, still persisting in their refusal of the land-route, while our party as steadily rejected the dubious chances of the shattered long-boat, we succeeded in securing the services of a number of mules, whose owners were found playing *monte* in the Calle de Pineda, and agreed with them to transport us and our baggage to Rivas at the rate of four dollars per mule, the train to start early on the following morning.

There had been a regular succession of rain squalls during our two days' stay here, the thermometer at noon standing at 90° in the shade, and the squalls succeeded by bursts of fierce sunlight, striking down among the dank foliage skirting the town in the background. Early next morning, fortified with a hearty breakfast, we began, with the anxiety of true novices in the science of Central American dilatoriness, to look about for our *arieros*, or muleteers. Dixon (an American in the company's office, to whom I was indebted for many useful hints) laughingly advised us to learn and adopt, as speedily as possible, the universal Spanish adage, *poco a poco*—literally, *take it easy*, for we would soon discover the fallacy of attempting to hurry a native.

At 10 o'clock, a cloud of dust, and a series of indescribable hoots and shouts, never heard out of American society, proclaimed the arrival of the New York passengers, who, to the number of several hundred, speedily took possession of the little town. Amid the uproar, and just as we had recognized a num-



ber of old Californians on their return to the land of gold, our mules arrived, and without waiting to admonish the *ariero* to future punctuality, we turned our faces toward Virgin Bay, a drenching shower of rain saluting us when little more than a mile on the road. This we knew we must become used to in the succeeding eight months; so, wrapping our *ponchos* about us, we pressed cheerily onward, looking forward with eager hope to our arrival at Rivas.

It was with pride as Americans that we viewed the fine Macadamized road, extending a distance of thirteen miles through a dense jungle, the wild aspect of the surrounding country contrasting curiously with the evidences of civilization and the results of active industry displayed in the bridges and excavations along the route. The work was one of many examples beyond the limits of the United States, where the genius and enterprise of our countrymen are overcoming the terrors of tropical climates, and opening to the world the vast undeveloped fields of enterprise presented through the Central American Isthmus.

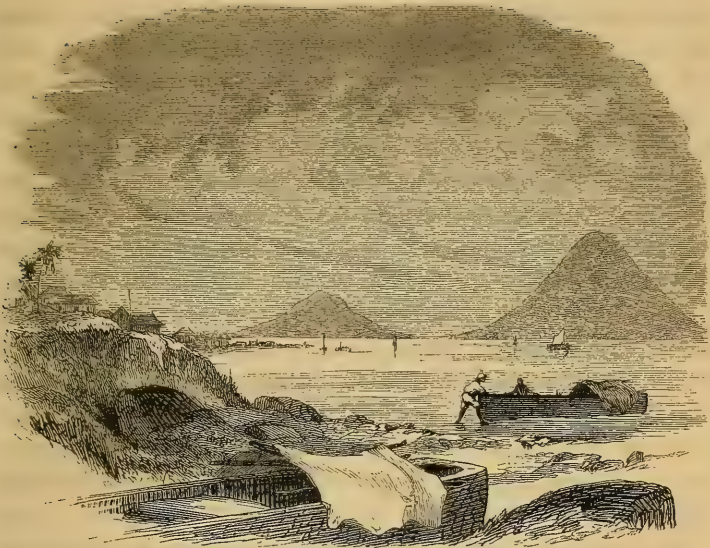
To us, who had for years beheld at San Francisco the semi-monthly arrival of hundreds of passengers passing with safety through these regions, there seemed scarcely any thing *foreign* in the scene. But the profuse vegetation bounding the view on every side, the flights of painted macaws and noisy parrots passing at intervals overhead, the impressive stillness of the forest, added to the undefined and interesting country through which our journey must carry us before the distant goal could be reached, produced a glad exhilaration of spirits, a joyous sense of freedom, with a prospective dash of wild adventure only known to those who, from necessity or choice, have left behind them the restraints and conventionalities of society.

Most American readers have been accustomed from childhood to associate romantic and often extravagant ideas with those mysterious countries whose dusky tribes, birds of brilliant plumage, strange animals, and precious products were brought to light by the explorations of the Spanish adventurers of the sixteenth century. The limited means of information, often confined to the exaggerated chronicles of the early conquerors, or the fabulous tales of the *padres* accompanying them; the

unimportant commerce hitherto existing between the Central American States and the maritime nations of the world; the difficulty of communication until the gold placers of California awakened those dozing solitudes into life as a means of transit to the Pacific; their retired position, apparently out of the great routes of the world's commerce—these and other evident causes have, until within the last few years, not only prevented the country from becoming more intimately known, but seemed to offer few, if any inducements to the merchant or the traveler.

The mahogany vessel returning from the pestiferous lowlands of the Spanish Main, her crew often pallid with disease, and bearing appalling accounts of the climate they had left, were enough to influence the mind of even the hardiest adventurer, while the fate of the few attempts to colonize with European settlers seemed to point out the coast as a Golgotha for all foreigners venturesome enough to make it even a temporary place of residence. Of the interior, little or nothing was known except that it was a "tropical climate"—quite sufficient to make the trader reflect long and earnestly before visiting its shores, and the mariner to turn with a shudder from the proposed voyage. The advance of civilization is fast placing Central America in glowing prominence before the world. Old and fabulous ideas respecting its people and climate are giving way before the research of the nervous Anglo-Saxon race. Tales of its poisonous miasma; its inviting exterior, concealing savage beasts of prey and venomous reptiles; its dark jungles, the birth-place of malaria, and its luxuriant foliage, exhaling the vapors of disease and death—these have passed away as idle dreams, and no longer deter the march of the adventurer. The natural resources of the country, equaling in variety and excelling in quantity those of the coveted Cuba, added to its proximity to the United States, can not but eventually bring it into closer intimacy with the spirit of commercial enterprise characterizing the day.

Our *ariero* was a Jamaican, whose occupation was to furnish mules to the Transit Company at a stipulated price per head. He was said to be the owner of above a hundred animals, employing a large number of natives, and I was assured by a negro who walked beside my mule that it was no small honor to be attended in person by the "patron."



VIRGIN BAY.

About half way over the road we came to an elevated place, from which, the forest opening to the eastward, we obtained a glimpse of the volcano of Ometepe, situated on the island of that name, to the eastward of Virgin Bay. The atmosphere being perfectly clear, and the rays of a noonday sun striking upon its side, produced the remarkable indigo hue described in several Central American works as marking the distant mountain scenery of the country. This was my first glimpse of the great volcanic chain extending through Nicaragua, and it was only then that I began to realize the fact that I was amid the scenery and florid verdure of the tropics—in a land whose history, extending back to the discovery of the continent, was rife with interest and romance.

Shortly after noon we came out at the little town known as Virgin Bay, and cantering down its one wide and well-graded thoroughfare we pulled up at the house of Judge Cushing, at this time the acting agent of the Transit Company. We were kindly invited to dismount; and when, upon entering the cool and stately room of the agent, I was introduced to an old and valued acquaintance (late chargé to Ecuador), I felt well repaid for the melting journey from San Juan del Sur. From the



window, opening upon the lake, we obtained a fine view of this noble expanse of water. A gentle breeze entered the room, cool from the waves beyond. Far to the southeast, the diurnal *chubasco*, or afternoon squall of the rainy season, was making up, the sombre shadows cast by the castellated clouds creeping gradually up until the entire southern horizon was shaded in gloom, and the lofty peaks of Ometepe and Madera were enveloped in impenetrable clouds. Vivid flashes of lightning and loud thunder soon announced the nearer approach of the storm, and in another minute the view was entirely shut out by a sheet of falling water, which, passing on to the town, steamed off the heated tiles with curious effect. Judge Cushing assured us that this was by no means equal to the usual severe thunderstorms of this season. It was of short duration, however, and the sky clearing up about 2 o'clock, we prepared to continue our journey toward Rivas, a distance of some ten miles.

While in San Juan, Mr. Pardee, U. S. Consul at that place, learning that I intended to stop at Leon, had given me official letters to Castellon, there then being no safe means of communication with the northern part of the state. Both parties claiming to be the legitimate rulers of the land, he had not decided which to recognize, but finally judged it safe, for the present, to admit the rights of those actually in possession. His letters were consequently addressed to the Provisional Director, acknowledging his authority, and requesting his *exequatur*. Judge Cushing also felt disposed to admit the Castellon cause; but, both parties claiming the moneys due from the Transit Company to the state, he had, with true diplomacy, refused payment to either, until the tide of events should set permanently in favor of one or the other party.

We left Rivas, the mercury at 90° in the shade, and were strenuously advised by a new acquaintance, a Dr. Davis, claiming to be surgeon-general of the democratic army, not to start. Not having, however, acquired, as yet, the *poco a poco* style of the country, we disregarded the advice and pushed on; in half an hour we were joined by the doctor, a stout, jovial fellow, who, preferring company on his route, came cantering along on a raw-boned horse rejoicing in the sobriquet of "Chingo."

The doctor was a native of Ohio, and had lived in Nicaragua

for three years, where he had seen every species of adventure, at one time working a silver mine, at another residing as physician in Granada or Masaya; now fighting in the revolutions of the country, and now acting as mate on board some of the lake steamers. He ascribed his present exalted station to the influence of an officer whom he had frightened into good-humor during a quarrel a few weeks since. The doctor was strongly compromised on the Castellon side, had taken an active part in the battles of the preceding May, and was now bound to the "Jalteva," on the outskirts of Granada, where Chamorro was closely besieged by about twelve hundred *Leoneses* under the command of General Jerez. He had been to Virgin Bay to bear dispatches and obtain medicines, and was now returning to take part in the siege. He also stated that in Rivas he had half a dozen companions, Americans, who would accompany us toward Granada.

Though pleased with the company of my new acquaintance, I was not sure of the propriety of traveling with his party, as they anticipated being at least taken prisoners on the route and carried into Granada, where the fact of accompanying them would insure my confinement for an indefinite time. However, the journey must be made, and, resolving to trust to the chances, we pushed on.

Our road from Virgin Bay toward Rivas lay along the banks of the lake about four miles, and the rest of the way through a well-cultivated country, composed of several large and many small cacao and other plantations. On our left stretched an apparently impenetrable growth of ceiba, guanacaste, and other trees, whose dim and silent leafy glades, as we rode past them, appeared to be as strange and solitary as when the old Spanish conquerors first trod this prolific soil. To the right lay the great lake, its extent forcing itself upon our senses by the horizon presented eastward, and against the dreamy sky, a schooner, hull down, beating up toward Granada. This was the only sign of commerce. The recent squall had set the waters in commotion, and the heavy surf rolled along the beach, frequently wetting the feet of our mules, and at times dashing boldly against some headland, to double which we were often obliged to enter the lake and urge our animals nearly up to the saddle-

girth. Far beyond, and looming up in the clear sky, the volcano of Zapatero (the shoemaker) reared its head, while to the right, and apparently springing out of the lake, stood Ometepe and Madera, the island on which they are situated sunk below the horizon. These volcanoes are the unfailing landmarks throughout the state.

There are various legends connected with Ometepe, which is estimated to be six thousand feet in height, though I am not aware that any measurement has ever been made of its altitude. There are several old Indian families on the island, who earn an easy living by raising vegetables, which they dispose of at Virgin Bay, making daily trips across in bongos. I was informed by Mr. Geer, a gentleman residing several years at Virgin Bay and San Juan del Sur, that no one is known to have made the ascent to its peak. He, in company with two adventurous friends, attempted it three years since, and, starting from the base at five o'clock in the morning, arrived within a few hundred feet of the summit about ten hours afterward. Here, however, they encountered a steep ascent of cinders, up which they vainly endeavored to scramble until, exhausted with their efforts, and sliding back at every moment, they were glad to desist and commence the descent the same afternoon. An old Indian, who claims to have reached the summit many years since, states that there is a lake of water situated in what he describes as an extinct crater. Mr. Geer endeavored to ascertain this fact, which the old natives stoutly adhere to, and is inclined to believe it from having observed above him, against the side of a high perpendicular cliff, the peculiar shadows produced by the reflection of waves in the sunlight against a wall. There is also a considerable stream issuing from the side of the mountain a few hundred feet above the surface of the lake, which could hardly be accounted for in any other manner than by supposing a lake above. The constant clouds around the peak would seem to supply such a body of water. Future investigation, however, will doubtless solve the problem.

The shores of Lake Nicaragua differ little from those of the ocean, and a stranger, to view the swells setting in here during a heavy blow, might easily suppose himself on the sea-beach.

As I paused on a small cape or promontory jutting into the

lake, and noted the splendid expanse of water before me—a horizon of waves, navigable for large vessels in nearly every part, surrounded by land, teeming with spontaneous vegetation, and justly denominated “the garden of the world”—I could not repress a feeling of deep regret that a spot upon which Nature seemed to have lavished her choicest gifts should be but a theatre for bloodthirsty revolutions and fruitless wars; agriculture and commerce existing but in name, and its history a reproach to the possessors of the soil. Surely a country so happily located, lying midway between the five continents, must ere long become the scene of industry, either under the guidance of its native inhabitants or in the hands of strangers.

Along our route we found flocks of aquatic birds, some of them of the heron species. We passed within a few yards of them before they arose, with shrill screams, alighting a short distance beyond. Evidently they were rarely molested or shot. A variety of excellent fish may be taken in the lake, but during our stay in its vicinity none were offered for sale. It was plain the inhabitants are too indolent to avail themselves of this luxury. Large *tiburones* (sharks) have been captured in the lake; and a few months previous, a woman at Virgin Bay, washing on the banks, was seized and killed by an alligator.

A tall, rocky bluff impeding our further progress by the beach, we followed a narrow path to the left abruptly into the forest, and, after plunging about for some time in a black mire, into which our mules sank nearly to the knees at every step, we emerged again upon the lake at the mouth of a small stream about fifty yards wide, and known as the River Lejas. This stream, dry during the summer months, was now of formidable depth, and, as our men informed us, the resort of alligators, who ensconce themselves here among the reeds and bushes as a retreat from the high winds.

A canoe, hollowed out of a ceiba-tree, lay moored at the bank. Two half-naked ferrymen were cooking beef at a fire near the hut of branches and reeds which served them for a residence. Nasario commenced unsaddling our mules, and placed the trappings in the canoe, while Chico, the doctor's servant, a sprightly little fellow from Costa Rica, attended to his master's baggage. As we were preparing to embark, our attention was called to



three or four large black objects a few hundred yards up the river, which our men told us were alligators. Little relishing the clumsy, teetering affair in which we were about to enter, I weighed the chances of a bath in the sullen waters and the possibility of yielding one or both of my legs to the monsters around us, who were evidently intent on our movements.

The mules, after some beating and coaxing, were driven into the stream, and, sinking to their noses, they struck boldly across, Nasario yelling loudly at them, and, in answer to my inquiries, remarking that there was nothing to fear from "los lagartos" while there was so much noise on the banks. We followed the mules, and, saddling up, paid the ferryman a dollar each, and continued our journey, but not until I had shot an armadillo, which showed itself just as we were mounting. These animals I afterward found to be very common, though at the time I was desirous of preserving the shell or incrustated covering.

The night had now set in, and in half an hour we came to another small stream, into which the doctor fearlessly urged his horse, with the remark that he had often crossed it at higher stages of tide than now; but he had not calculated for the direction of the winds during the last week, and when within a yard of the opposite shore he suddenly disappeared in a quicksand. It was with the greatest difficulty that we saved him and horse from drowning. After wringing out his clothes and taking an extra pull at a bottle of aguardiente, which he never failed to have in his *maleta*, he remounted with great good-humor, and, piloting us some distance, crossed the stream higher up. Striking a mule-trail, half path and half slough, we plunged into the forest, the way so completely walled on each side with shrubbery as to shut out even the dim light of the stars, and prevent our distinguishing any object a yard in advance.

Onward dashed the doctor, however, halting at intervals to allow us to overtake him, shouting at the top of his voice to indicate the direction, and usually passing around the bottle to the equestrian group before resuming the march. He affirmed that a moderate use of the *aguardiente del pais*, when undergoing excitement, exposure, or fatigue, had enabled him to experience the greatest trials without sickness. After my arrival in Leon I was assured of the same by two foreign physicians. The bev-

erage, whatever may be its beneficial properties, is one of the most repulsive of drinks; and months afterward, when I had become used to the customs of the country, I could never taste it without a sensation of disgust.

The premonitory muttering of thunder, which for the last hour had been heard in the distance, now became nearer, and the ominous pattering of large drops among the jungle soon changed into a steady downpour, accompanied with crashing thunder, and lightning so vivid as to illuminate the woods in all directions, bringing into view with painful distinctness every twig and leaf, to be again succeeded by inky darkness. The hollows of the muddy road became formidable pools, through which, and over the irregularities of the path, we pushed steadily along, our late romantic enthusiasm having changed into a musing silence, occasionally interrupted by the shout of some one of the party lost in the darkness. From time to time through the heated night-air the cries of frogs, tree-toads, and night-birds came up shrill and monotonous from the surrounding fens, while the occasional snorting of our mules, as they stumbled along, nose to the ground, through the miry path, seemed a relief to the solitary wildness of the route.

We had reached within a mile of Rivas when the moon arose, making our path somewhat plainer; and soon the furious barking of a pack of dogs assured us that we were entering the precincts of the town.

Thatched and tiled houses became more frequent, and the noise of the dogs brought loungingly to his door the swarthy villager, who, scanning us from under his hand as we splashed by, either replied briefly to our salutation, or watched us in silence till we disappeared in the darkness. Turning a sharp angle formed by a row of low, whitewashed adobe houses, we traversed a roughly-paved but dilapidated street, silent as the grave, clattering through which we came out upon the grand Plaza of Rivas, seen by the dim rays of the moon, with its partly-built church and regular private dwellings, presenting a much more impressive spectacle than we had been prepared to meet, and awakening agreeable anticipations for the morrow.

We followed the doctor to the door of the most important house on the Plaza, whence issued a gentleman who addressed

us in English, and was introduced as Dr. Cole. With characteristic hospitality we were invited to alight, hammocks and beds were prepared for our party, a boy sent out to meet our lagging *arieros* with the baggage-mules, and in another half hour a supper of hot coffee, eggs, and *pan dulce* was prepared for us by the hands of the señora herself, whom our host informed us he had lately married from one of the first families of the department.

While the supper was cooking we strolled up the nearest street, now brightly illumined by the moon, and, passing the ruins of the church of San Felipe, destroyed some years since by an earthquake, came to a log and mud fort with one embrasure, out of which looked the muzzle of a small cannon (about a six-pounder), while a loud and startling challenge, "*Quien vive ?*" brought us to the consciousness that we were in a garrisoned town. "*La Patria !*" we replied. "*Que gente ?*" "*Nicaragua !*" But, though now permitted to continue our stroll, we were too tired to satisfy our curiosity, and retraced our steps. After the welcome repast, lighting the *cigarro* proffered to us by the señora, we entered into conversation with our host, an intelligent and well-educated gentleman, whose life, passed among the southern cities, had been an unceasing round of excitement : Texas, Mexico, California, China, and Central America had each been the respective theatre of his numerous adventures. He had finally settled in Nicaragua, drawn thither, he said, by the flattering accounts of the country. Here he had married the daughter of a large cacao planter, and, being a physician by profession, had already acquired the confidence and good-will of the people. I asked him how he had succeeded in overcoming the religious scruples of the lady, having heard that none but Catholics were permitted by the rules of the Church to marry into the native families. He replied that, although this was generally believed to be the case, such objections were rarely, if ever, urged where the affections of the lady or the interest of the parents were engaged.

The night was far advanced when, availing ourselves of the kindly hospitalities of our host, we retired to rest, and slept soundly, despite the bleating of a young goat, and the nipping of myriads of those indispensable household articles, "*pulgas.*"

## CHAPTER II.

Rivas.—Evidence of an older City.—Department Meridional.—Agriculture.—Country Houses.—Productions.—Dwelling-houses.—Hacienda of Santa Ursula.—Cacao Planting.—Scenery.—Boa Constrictor.—An Alarm.—José Bermudas.—Women.—Piety.—Bust of Washington.—Earthquakes.—Difficulties of Departure.—The Start.—Obraje.—Oracion.—Tropical Scenery.—Las Candelillas.—Right of Search.—The Camp.—Shooting Deer.—Valley of Nau-dyme.—Ochomogo.—Startling News.—The Retreat.—Hacienda de San Francisco.—Las Tortilleras.—A Night's March.—Rivas again.

It is supposed that Rivas stands upon the site of a much older city, there being traces of ancient streets running in an opposite direction to the present ones. The Department Meridional, of which it is the capital, having from time immemorial been subject to more severe earthquakes than occur in the northern portions of the state, it is believed that the ruins are those of a city destroyed a century since. No reliable account, however, exists of the circumstance.

The town stands in the centre of an extensive plain overgrown with rank vegetation and interspersed with cacao, coffee, sugar, and indigo plantations, which are reckoned among the most valuable in the state. It is situated about three miles from the lake, and is surrounded by several small towns, properly outskirts of Rivas, but each designated by its particular name. The town, with its environs, is doubtless the third in population in Nicaragua, though the foliage intersecting the numerous small haciendas and the garden space allotted to each residence hides its true proportions. Toward the lake, and serving as an *embarcadero* for the town, is the village of San Jorge, which is usually estimated as a portion of Rivas.

The inhabitants of the Department Meridional are mostly *mestizos*, or the mixed races of Indian and negro. At the time of my visit, nearly all of the men had fled to the more secluded parts of the country to avoid impressment into the army, there being no respect shown where the government stood in need of soldiers. This left the estates, especially those devoted to



the culture of cacao, entirely deserted of labor, and in many instances the result of years of patient toil had been lost by the summary seizure of the workmen of the plantation. With such high-handed practices, there can be but little encouragement for agricultural industry. Indeed, I was credibly informed by Mr. Stanisbury, married into one of the Rivas families, that the proportion of women to men was as four to two at that time, owing to the desertion of the pueblos by the male inhabitants.

Most of the haciendas are approached from the *camino real*, or public highway, by almost hidden paths, leading miles into the interior, and which would usually escape the notice of any but experienced eyes. They are situated generally in remote places, and as far as practicable from the theatre of the frequent revolutions devastating the land and always effectually frustrating for the time the labors of the cultivator. From these retreats the natives repair occasionally to the cities with vegetables and fruit, but in times of revolution with the constant fear of being entrapped and enlisted.

The dwellings of the country estates, as well as of the smaller towns, are usually rude and lightly-constructed huts of cane, thatched with dried palm-leaves, which, when carefully placed, are impervious to the rain. Chimneys are dispensed with, the door serving as a means of egress for the smoke, or, oftener, the cooking being done in the open air, and the family sitting around the fire at meal times. At no season of the year is the climate of sufficient severity to require more substantial dwellings. In the larger towns, however, the houses are of adobe, neatly and even handsomely built, and commonly whitewashed over plastered walls, with regularly-laid tiles for roofs.

The capabilities of Nicaragua, and especially of the southern portion of the state, are yet unknown, and, until the present time, there seems to have been but little inducement for the development of her resources. It needs but healthy activity to bring the advantages of the state into use, labor to be protected and guaranteed by a stable and reliable government. At every point there are evidences of Nicaragua having been at no distant period a populous and thriving country. Its churches, cities, aqueducts, and vats—its great plantations, mouldering to decay, overgrown with trees and clustering vines, their bounds only in-

licated by the imperishable fence of cactus standing as in mockery of the idleness and misrule which have reduced it to its present condition, all point to a day when even the enervating influences of the climate had been insufficient to produce the demoralizing effects now witnessed after thirty years of internal dissensions.

The coffee and cacao raised in the vicinity of Rivas stand higher in the market than that of any other in the state. But little is exported, the greater part being consumed in the country, where it is a universal article of food, being drunk thicker than chocolate at every meal, and making a pleasant beverage called *tiste*, used by all grades of society. What little is exported is often sold at \$20 the quintal. The coffee, though not bearing the reputation of the Costa Rica brands, is of excellent quality, and is a greater article of export than the cacao. Its cultivation has hitherto been much neglected, not only from the causes above enumerated, but from the difficulties of sending it to market, there having been but little communication with the outer world until the opening of the Transit Route. Corn, indigo, rice, and tobacco are also cultivated, but in small quantities of late, owing to the blighting effects of the wars. Sugar of an inferior kind is raised, the cane being indigenous to the country, and unlike that of the West Indies and southern United States. The rude machinery used for its manufacture prevents its becoming an important article of export, while but little more than what is required for home consumption is produced. The manufacture of *aguardiente* is the principal incentive to the culture of the cane. The raising of cotton of a superior kind was at one time a flourishing branch of industry, but this, like the other articles of agriculture, has declined before the breath of the universal destroyer.

An intelligent American merchant, who had resided for several years in various parts of Nicaragua, states that from the estimates he has made, comparative with Cuba and other West India islands, Nicaragua is capable of producing yearly out of what land is now cleared ten millions of bushels of corn, twelve thousand ceroons of indigo (the best in the world), untold cargoes of sugar, rice, starch, rosewood, dye-woods, medicines, and in all respects to effectually rival Cuba itself. Nature has done

her part; it needs but encouragement and enterprise to fulfill the most sanguine predictions.

Rivas proper contains about five thousand inhabitants, and is the centre of traffic for this department. Its streets are regularly laid out, paved, and of uniform width. The houses are of one story, with tiled roofs, heavy cedar doors, and entered from beneath an ample porch, also roofed with tiles. The dwelling, if of any pretension, includes a hollow square, the *patio* or arena forming the yard, into which the doors from the various rooms open, and the same corridor extending around the interior. This serves as a depository for goods, provisions, the baggage of travelers, saddles, and all the common articles of household furniture. The house is divided into the family parlor or reception-room, called the *sala*, and the sleeping-rooms of the family. Furniture is scantily placed around the room, and usually consists of a few heavy, straight-backed chairs, a clothes-press, and one or two small tables.

On the morning after our arrival we were early astir, and having performed our ablutions in an ancient tub in the *patio*, we started with our host to view the town. During our stay of a week, we made frequent excursions into the country, examining the haciendas in the environs, and observing the mode of cultivating the cacao and cane. A cacao estate contains from six hundred to five thousand acres of land. That of Santa Ursula, about two miles from town, and owned by Señor La Cayos, is one of the best cultivated in the vicinity, and has about two thousand trees. The hacienda of Señor Aigueyos is also one of the largest and most valuable in the Department. These, as well as others in this section of the state, are fast falling to decay. But three men were living on the estate, and the sad silence was unbroken save by the gentle rustling of the *madieras negros* and *platinos*, which, with the cactus, form a hedge protecting the young trees until they have gained sufficient strength to withstand the fierce rays of the sun. The mayor-domo, or overseer, met us at the entrance, politely invited us to walk through the grounds, cheerfully answering our questions, and, flattered by our admiration, soon became loquacious in describing the mode of culture.

The spot designed for the plantation is first grubbed and

cleared, the country being often burned over for the purpose, and the ground plowed to a depth of about six inches with the rude implement of the country. The young trees are then set out in squares about ten feet apart, while the intervening spaces are occupied with plantain and coffee trees to economize room. The *madera negra* is planted at regular intervals, whose leafy boughs effectually protect the vegetation beneath. Very few men are necessary to take care of a plantation no larger than that of Santa Ursula, the greater part of the labor being required at the time of harvest. The leaves are allowed to remain and rot upon the ground where they fall; the roots of the trees, however, are kept carefully cleaned, and each day the children of the mayor-domo or of the laborers pass through the plantation, destroying the insects, which, if allowed to remain, are fatal to the trees. The soil throughout this estate, as indeed is the case in most sections of lower Nicaragua, is a dark, rich mould, requiring, in its extreme prolific qualities, the constant use of the grub-hoe to prevent the weeds, which grow with rank luxuriance, from overrunning the hacienda.

From three to four years are required for the young trees to commence yielding fruit, after which they are said to produce for half a century. There are no estates, however, of that age, from which to judge of the correctness of this statement. It requires but a few years after the commencement of the hacienda for the whole estate to be firmly and beautifully inclosed with a hedge of cactus and plantain, often twenty feet in height, and impenetrable as the thickest jungle.

Nicaragua alone is capable of producing cacao enough to supply the North American continent, through the efforts of well-directed industry sustained by an enlightened government. The trees, as we saw them, had already yielded their fruit, but we observed the buds, blossoms, and fruit upon many of them.

Nothing can exceed the quiet beauty of one of these estates. Far as the eye could reach appeared leafy vistas fading in the distance, the view bounded by shady masses of verdure. The ground was perfectly level, thickly carpeted with dried leaves beaten flat to the earth by the rains, through which thousands of delicate green sprigs and pretty blossoms were springing and loading the air with grateful odors. The bright red berry of



the coffee-tree, mingling with the golden hues of the cacao and the clustering fruit of the plantain, orange, and lime, offered an agreeable contrast to the deep emerald of the foliage. Overhead, amid the leaves of the sheltering *palo negro*, fluttered flocks of parrots, hastening with noisy chatter from tree to tree, while at intervals the harsh scream of the macaw broke through the silence, his brilliant plumage just visible from the topmost branch of a distant guanacaste. The only indication of human presence was the voice of our *cicerone*, as he pointed out some curious shrub, explaining its properties, or directed our attention to the luxuriance of the gaudy tropical flowers. Here, indeed, seemed the region of eternal bloom, where, wild and unattended, the rarest plants and richest flowers cast abroad their fragrance and load the air with sweets. Peaceful Santa Ursula! it will be many years ere thy quiet, sleepy beauty can fade from my heart!

At the entrance of the estate, we stopped on our return to chat with a pretty-faced and rather tidily-dressed girl, the daughter of the owner, who invited us into the old adobe house. As we entered, half a dozen fierce dogs, aroused by our unusual costume, flew out of the corridor, but returned skulking to the steps at the rebuke of their mistress. A smiling, simple Indian girl, the servant of our lady friend, was leisurely sewing upon some fancy article of dress for an approaching *fiesta*. She raised a pair of pretty dark eyes toward us as we approached, but quickly resumed her work, and to an occasional question I put to her only looked at her lady and laughed. Unlike most of the women of the lower classes I had seen, she wore shoes and stockings—articles of luxury to which she was evidently unused, from the clumsiness of her walk as she arose to bring us a bunch of bananas. Nearly all the women of Rivas wear cheap necklaces, rings, and ear-ornaments, purchased of the itinerant traders, who have become familiar to all southern Nicaragua since the opening of the Transit Route.

Neither the mayor-domo nor the women knew the extent of the hacienda, but thought it might be half a league square. No admeasurements are taken in Nicaragua, the distances being calculated by *caballerias* or horseback-rides.

While talking here, we saw for the first time the *oropendola*,

a beautiful bird about the size of the robin, with black and red body, and yellow wings and tail; he is a fine singer, and is frequently caught and caged on that account. Here we took our first drink of *tiste*, a beverage composed of pounded cacao, sugar, and *panola*, or pounded parched corn. It is made very sweet, nearly of the consistency of gruel, which it somewhat resembles, and is really a delicious drink.

Swinging lazily in the hammock proffered us by the señorita, and listening to her story of the Revolution and its blighting effects upon the industry of the country, an hour passed pleasantly away. The gentle sea-breeze stirred the leafy branches, and passed gratefully through the wide corridor. "*Son ruinados todas las fiestas del país!*" said our little hostess, as she glanced mechanically into a looking-glass hanging near by, and speculated upon former days, when every other week was a feast-day, in which all the charms of bright eyes and red lips might be brought into play in the light *bolero* or merry *fandango*. Truly the happy days of Nicaragua seemed gone, and the country, once a dreamy paradise of pleasure and lazy enjoyment, given up to the hand of the destroyer.

After bidding adieu to our new acquaintance we turned toward the town, and were passing the entrance to a small, half-ruined hacienda, when the old *dueña* beckoned us to ride inside. We observed a group gathered around some object upon the ground, which we soon discovered to be a boa, just killed in the act of swallowing a guatusa, a little ground animal between the hedgehog and squirrel, and whose cries had attracted the crowd to the spot. The creature had its victim half swallowed when killed, the head of the little animal protruding from its mouth.

One of the women said it was fortunate to have killed the serpent, for it would one day have destroyed some of her children. I asked her if such a circumstance had ever occurred, to which the whole group screamed in the affirmative, and interrupted each other in the garrulous recounting of instances where, in the more retired haciendas, babes had been seized and killed by boas. The story, however, needs confirmation from a more reliable source. This snake measured fourteen feet in length, and nearly a foot in circumference at the largest part. They are said to attain a much larger size.

On our return to Rivas we found the little *cuartel* in a state of intense excitement. A courier had arrived with the alarming intelligence that the Chamorro troops, two hundred strong, were near the outskirts of the town, and preparing for attack. The little drum of the garrison was beating valorously to arms, and a general burnishing up of muskets going on. This proved to be a false alarm, and quiet was soon restored; but we had opportunity to observe the amount of confidence our American resident friends placed in the means of defense or the faith of the enemy. Dr. Cole already had his trunks packed, mules saddled, and his family prepared for instant flight toward San Juan del Sur, should the opposite party make their appearance. Several executions had taken place recently, in which the prisoners, being made to kneel down in the Plaza, were summarily shot through the heart. It was not a time to trust to the mercy of men made frantic by opposition and defeat, and thirsting for the blood of all Americans.

In the midst of the turmoil created by the cry of "*el enemigo!*" a single horseman dashed into the city, mounted on a spirited charger, with all the jingling accoutrements so coveted by the Spanish *caballero*. He spurred up to where we stood admiring his equestrianism, reining in his steed so as to throw a shower of sand and dust at our feet, and evidently chagrined that we remained unstartled by the dangerous proximity of his horse's heels. This was the celebrated Jose Bermudas, afterward killed in one of the bloody battles of the Revolution, and known as the boldest rider and fiercest fighting man in the Department. Large, expressive black eyes, coarse, long hair, a lithe form, and devil-may-care look and style of dress, set off his really graceful riding to great advantage.

He had now returned from an observation tour on his own account, and dismounted from his reeking horse just as the sky became overcast, and a sudden thunder-storm burst over the city. The streets were running streams in a short time, and the whole town, save a solitary donkey feeding on the Plaza, fled for shelter. Bermudas affected to despise the petty fighting of his countrymen, and often referred with awe to "*las grandes battallas de Mejico*" as the *ne plus ultra* of warlike annals. The thermometer, during our stay at Rivas, stood

nearly as follows: at 6 A.M., 82°; at 12 M., 98°; at 6 P.M., 88°. The temperature seemed very little altered by the rains in the afternoon. A very fine view of a portion of Lake Nicaragua and Ometepe is obtained from the church towers of Rivas.

The market-place is the northern and western sides of the grand Plaza. Here are displayed for sale the numerous fruits of the country, with Chili peppers, articles of light clothing, medicines, and trinkets. The goods, placed in large, flat baskets on the pavement, were presided over by women, who gazed curiously at us as we passed among their wares. Supposing that, as foreigners, we could not speak the language, they ventured various remarks concerning our personal appearance and dress. Mariano, however, answered a very fat old woman, who laughed at his narrow-brimmed straw hat, when the whole group broke into the most uproarious mirth, shouting, "*Es hijo del pais—habla bien el Español!*" and immediately commenced a conversation with us, in which they inquired the object of our journey, and advised us by no means to continue our route through the country. The Chamorro troops had possession of the road to Masaya, and no mercy would be shown to Americans. I have always found the women of the lower classes in Central America simple, kind-hearted, and hospitable, generally performing the most laborious part of the work, and never tiring under their ceaseless tasks. They are truly the hewers of wood and drawers of water. They listen with unaffected wonder to the accounts of North America and Europe given them by strangers, and are generally ready to extend such hospitality as their means admit.

The half-constructed church, "*La Parroquia*," forming the eastern side of the Plaza, has been brought to its present state of completion by the pious contributions of the women, who are always ready to respond with their limited means to the never-failing demands of the priesthood. The church has been fourteen years in process of construction, and at this time resembles the ruin of some ancient building. Trees of ten years' growth stand upon the walls, and are displacing the masonry, while the roofless interior presents an impassable mass of weeds and briery bushes. It is the type of a decaying country. In front of



the church are several considerable piles of stones, brought there by the women on feast-days for building material. Still faithful to the duties of religion, they are perfectly satisfied to be within sound of the church bell's clangor, and, amid the turmoils of revolutions and battles, they need but the reflection that they have contributed their weekly stipend to the holy work to banish all thoughts of care.

There are four churches in Rivas, in all of which mass is daily said and the usual Sunday services performed. Excepting the increased tinsel and ceremonies, the rites are similar to those of the Catholic church elsewhere. Most of the worshipers are women, who make it the first duty of the morning to repair to mass. Kneeling upon the stone pavement, with faces toward the altar, they seem motionless as statues, while the monotonous voice of the priest chants at intervals, accompanied by a few choristers with one or two violins, a rude violoncello, and often a clarionet.

One of the padres, a remarkable old man, with intelligent face and dignified mien, had been to the United States some twenty years before, and, returning, brought with him the bust of his idol—Washington—which, curiously enough, now occupied a niche in the church at which he officiated, standing *vis à vis* with the cowed and bearded images of saints and martyrs.

After four days of impatient waiting for the arrival of mules promised us by our *ariero* from Virgin Bay, the lions of Rivas began to cloy upon our tastes. A small degree of attention and observation suffices to possess one of every fact of interest connected with the place. Its quiet rural scenery, dead streets, silent churches, and listless inhabitants, afford but an uninteresting theme. On the third day my patience began to exhaust itself, despite the friendly admonitions of my friend Dixon, at San Juan, to "keep cool." The monotony of the life became disgusting. Day after day I awaited the arrival of the promised mules, and finally dispatched a courier to Virgin Bay for them, who returned on the same evening with the laconic announcement "*no hay*"—there are none. Messages sent to San Jorge, Obraje, Potosí, and other surrounding places, where I heard of *arieros* herding their mules, were equally unsuccessful. In fact, the custom pursued by the government of sum-

marily seizing man and beast for the purposes of the war, made every mule-owner fearful of exposing his property.

On the evening of the fourth day I made my fifth solemn engagement with natives for animals, all the preceding ones having proved futile, the parties not even appearing to offer an excuse for non-compliance with the contract. The doctor recommended me to "keep cool, and not fret;" I should learn more of the habits of the people before I left the country. The fellow with whom I now engaged promised, with such an air of sincerity, to be at the door punctually at 8 o'clock, that I could not disbelieve him. The doctor, however, laughed at my idea of starting on the day proposed, and the señora stared at me as a wonder of hurry and precipitation when I ordered the baggage packed and placed in a convenient spot for loading. The predictions of my host were too true—I never saw my man again.

I now bethought myself of making application to Don Buenaventura Selva, Commandante Militar of the Department, and a strong Castellon man. Taking my friend Davis to introduce me, I proceeded to the cuartel. A barefooted sentinel stood at the doorway, who shouldered his musket as we came up, in deference to a military cap which the doctor had insisted upon my wearing to enforce our demands, observing that any martial insignia would do more to insure respect than a whole Chesterfield of politeness.

We found the commandante seated in a large, straight-backed arm-chair, in company with several official-looking personages, all smoking *cigarros*, while two men, apparently just arrived from a long journey, were eating *tortillas* and cheese in an adjoining room. My companion introduced me bluntly as the bearer of dispatches from the United States to Don Francisco Castellon! an assertion I did not think it prudent to contradict at the time. The company arose at the announcement, which was made with great formality, and the habitual politeness of the Spaniard became apparent. The news from California was inquired for, and the subject of my negotiations delicately hinted at, but it was a part of my diplomacy to remain silent upon this head. Don Buenaventura blamed me for not calling upon him for mules, as the orders of government were to forward all public persons at the state's expense, which I afterward learned

consisted in forcibly detaining the first animal that presented itself. Mules were promised for that afternoon, and with many obsequious bows and the exchange of *cigarros* (an emblem of friendship) we departed. "At last," thought I, "the long-wished-for mules are forthcoming." Toward evening we called again, lest the "cares of state" should have caused our commandante to forget his profuse promises. He assured us, however, that our mules were close at hand, and would be ready as soon as our baggage was prepared. But night came, and, upon renewing our visit at daylight, Señor Buenaventura had left town to be gone all day.

This disappointment over, we applied to an officer near by to let us two sorry-looking beasts feeding upon *secate* in the *patio*, which, after two hours' consideration, he agreed to do at an exorbitant price. It was too late, however, to effect any thing that day, and we retired to our house to await the hour of starting on the following morning. A night's rest restored our tempers, and we early dispatched our man round to the *cuartel* for the beasts. After an hour's absence, he returned with the not unexpected announcement "*no hay!*" I now began to despair. It appeared that neither fair promises nor money could purchase mules in Rivas, nor could they be stolen or borrowed. But, while we were becoming nearly blasphemous on the subject of Nicaraguan punctuality or the want of it, a muleteer arrived from Rivas, on his way to Masaya, with several cargoes of cacao and three saddle-mules. A bargain was soon struck, and, though not willing to start at once, which would have proved an anomaly in Central American habits, we got fairly away by 5 o'clock P.M.

It being noised abroad that "*los Americanos*" were about starting, our party was joined by nearly a dozen natives, who, as we now found, had been awaiting the benefit of our escort and company on the road. We tarried until a heavy thunderstorm had passed, and then mounting, defiled in regular order across the Plaza, passed the barracks, and out of the town, Dr. Davis leading the column, and looking back with no little pride at the array of mounted men and bristling arms. The procession, ludicrous as it appeared to us, with its shaggy, long-eared mules, and the mixed costume of their riders, was, nevertheless,

a formidable-looking band, and a number of enthusiastic “*vivas!*” attested to the impression we made as we left the town. Four of us carried rifles and revolvers, and the remainder either old flint-lock muskets or harmless pistols—the martial display of which, added to the respect given to armed Americans, was deemed of sufficient importance to prevent attack from any small body of the enemy likely to be scouring the highway.

A few minutes’ ride carried us out of the town. Opposite the house of Señor Hurtado we met an American resident riding furiously into Rivas, who advised us to turn back and await the confirmation of the news of the approach of Chamorro’s troops. The roads he represented as next to impassable, and infested with hostile bodies of men. But a week of this monotonous life had thoroughly disgusted me, and, anxious to press on, we determined to run the gauntlet and risk the chances. The estate opposite to which we stood in consultation was deserted save by a few natives left in charge and the usual pack of dogs. Pursuing our march, we crossed the River Gonzales, about five miles from the town, and at 6 o’clock arrived at the village of Obraje, where it was deemed prudent to pass the night. As we rode up to the little *cuartel*, the commander came forth to meet us, and upon learning we were Americans and on the Castellon side, ordered one of his men to bring out a jug of *aguardiente*, passing the liquor around to the group in turn. The sentinel, who, on our appearance, had not made up his mind as to our stripe, actually trembled as we drew up in front of the *cabilda*, but, seeing the liquor brought forth, became reassured of our friendly disposition.

At the invitation of a venerable old man, who offered us such entertainment as his house afforded for the night, we dismounted, and, sending our animals to a *corral* near by, entered the house, where the señora and her daughters quietly prepared a smoking supper for the troop.

While we were unsaddling the mules, the bell of the little church struck the signal for *oracion*, when, in an instant, every head was uncovered, and for a few minutes a silence fell upon the town until the tinkling monitor led off with a merry peal, upon which the previous occupations were renewed. From the commander of the post to the meanest inhabitant, the observance



of this little rite seemed an habitual duty to be regarded as sacred. Months afterward, among the lonely mountains of Honduras, when this ceremony was repeated at the secluded villages of the interior, I always remembered this, the first occasion on which I had witnessed it. But a moment is occupied, no duties are neglected, and by many it might be regarded as a symbol of slavish obedience to the formalities of Catholicism; but the act, so simple in itself, so primitive in its character, has ever since remained pleasantly impressed on my mind, as an evidence of the devout tendencies of the people.

At night we spread our blankets around the corridor, and under a canopy of sky thickly studded with stars, the silver crescent sinking behind the deep foliage to the westward, our party was soon asleep, one of the number keeping guard; though the precaution seemed hardly necessary, considering the proximity of the neighboring sentinel.

At early dawn we were astir, and having paid our old enter-tainer, we mounted, and at six o'clock left the town, bidding a jovial farewell to the fat *commandante*, and hiring a boy to guide us through a road running to the westward of the *camino real*, which we learned was almost impassable with mud. Antonio, our guide, offered his services to Masaya for five dollars; and though we took his assertion "*hay lodo señores hasta la cincha*" with due allowance, still it seemed better to proceed cautiously. Accordingly, we left the usual highway, and, following our bare-legged conductor, who trotted lightly along in advance, were quickly buried in a dense forest, through which the path ran in a zigzag course, adapting itself to the inequalities of the ground. The morning was delicious, and with the cheery notes of bright-winged birds, the glimpses of clear sky obtained from amid the lattice-work of graceful limbs, and the fresh and invigorating air of the woods, we pushed merrily on, conversing with our native companions, who freely expressed their opinions of the revolution. Most of them were merchants—men, more than others, likely to feel the depressing influence of the wretched system of government under which they labored, and careless of any change through which a commercial stability might be reinstated.

The scenery throughout our ride of about eight miles, from

Obraje to a small hacienda called Los Candeleros, was of the most romantic and beautiful description. It was in the season of the heaviest rains, when the damp mould, steaming with heat, and forcing into life the rank vegetation of the country, gave birth to every variety of vine and creeper, forming tangled webs along the path, or climbing the stately *ceibas*, flashing with its superb red flower, twined their rich emerald festoons among the tasseled blossoms. Twice we saw groups of red monkeys chasing each other through the forest, and pursuing their gambols at a dizzy height; now swinging with wonderful precision from limb to limb, or hanging above our path, and scolding with ludicrous earnestness at our intrusion upon their domain. Flocks of parrots enlivened the woods with their screams, and the occasional harsh cry of the blue heron mingled at times with the howl of the *mono colorado*. We were just in the vein to enjoy to the utmost the freshness and wild beauty of the scene, while each new and strange object had for us all the charms with which the reader's imagination first revels in the florid descriptions of tropical life and scenery.

At noon we were at Los Candeleros, a secluded spot, situated about midway between the lake and ocean, and scarcely ever visited except in the season of the rains, when it serves as a sort of half-way house for travelers on this by-path between Rivas and Nandyme. Crossing a shallow creek, pouring violently over the rocks toward the Rio Gonzales, into which it empties, we came suddenly upon a mule-train under the direction of a muleteer of so suspicious a look that the doctor, much against our wishes, stopped him and demanded to see his passport. It was not, however, a time to demur; rapine and treachery were abroad, and the man, with no ceremony, produced his papers, which were rigidly examined, after which he was suffered to pass. Our friend offered as an excuse that supplies of powder were expected to be smuggled to certain adherents of Chamorro at Rivas. The *ariero*, however, seemed to think it a matter of course to be searched. A few rods from the creek, and up a steep declivity, we came to the hacienda, said once to have been a place of considerable importance, but now displaying only a few bush-huts, in one of which we found two natives, who started up at our arrival, evidently alarmed at

our appearance and numbers. They were soon reassured, and in reply to our inquiries for beef or food of any kind, pointed to a thicket near by, in which they said a deer could be easily shot.

We left the doctor to superintend the rebuilding of a fire, the embers of which were still smoking within the hut, and a sprightly little old native, named Cebellos, offering to accompany me, we sallied out into the valley beneath, as much to obtain a draft of the pure water of the brook as with any hope of meeting game. We had scarcely penetrated twenty rods, when the peculiar hissing noise used in Central America to attract attention caused us to look back, and we espied one of the natives, who had silently followed us, pointing down the stream. I followed the direction indicated, and my heart jumped with excitement at seeing a beautiful buck standing beneath a projecting rock, with his fore legs in the water, his head and ears erect, nostrils dilated, and a pair of great black eyes staring intently at our movements; beyond was a doe, equally interested in watching us, the two not fifty yards off. In another moment I had my rifle leveled. The unsuspecting innocence with which these usually shy creatures awaited the discharge caused me to almost falter in the murderous design. The scruple was but momentary. My two native companions wrinkled up their faces in anticipation, and in another moment, as the woods re-echoed the crack of the rifle, my glorious prize sprang forward, and, with a single bound, reached the crag, stopped, struggled upward, and finally fell heavily into the bed of the creek. Cebellos uttered a triumphant yell, and rushed toward the victim, while the doe disappeared like a flash into the woods. The native deliberately drew his knife, and, cutting the throat of the animal, dissected enough for present use, and, backing it up to the camp, presently set before us a delicious steak, the cutting of which I took care to direct; for the *gente del pais* beyond the immediate vicinity of the Transit Route, where their contact with foreigners has somewhat civilized them, have little idea of carving, cutting off huge, unwieldy lumps of beef or venison, which they throw upon the coals, and eat half cooked, and charred on the outside to a crisp.

I presented the occupants of the hut with such of the meat as

was not required by our party, and at 3 o'clock we resumed the journey toward Nandyme, followed by the hearty "*adios*" of the natives, whose good opinion of Americans had been greatly increased by sundry potations from the doctor's aguardiente fountain, which, as I thought, held out like the widow's cruse.

The heat had now grown intense. The woods, becoming copses somewhat like the oak openings of our Western country, disclosed green patches of grass, in which we found growing the *mansanito*, or wild apple of the country. We also passed the ruins of an indigo estate, the vats and rude machinery hidden from view by vines and shrubbery, which, in this climate, however often the hand of industry may clear them away, reproduce themselves, as if by magic, and quickly overrun the neglected plantation. From a small eminence on our route we obtained an extensive view of the valley of Nandyme, glowing in the sunlight, and the scene bounded by the undulating woodlands around the volcano of Masaya.

At 6 o'clock we arrived at the River Ochomogo, evidently dry in the summer, and having now, after the late copious rains, but three feet of water. Our path led directly out of the forest into the main road, and, crossing the stream, we observed a solitary horseman spur away toward Nandyme. We rode up to the hacienda, consisting of one large adobe house recently built, and used as a residence for *vaqueros*, this being one of the principal cattle estates in southern Nicaragua. Two young men gazed earnestly at us through the partly-closed window, and then, issuing from the building, ran hastily toward the doctor, to whom they whispered the ominous words,

"*Cuidado, el enemigo !*"

"*Adonde ?*" asked the doctor.

"*Aquí no mas,*" was the whispered response; and then the doctor, recognizing in the speaker a former patient whose life he had saved by the performance of a surgical operation, ascertained that *los Chamoristos*, consisting of eighty men, had left Nandyme the day before, and were now on their way to Rivas. The horseman who had so unceremoniously left on seeing us was one of the scouts who had been ordered to watch for our appearance. Not anticipating our taking the upper road, we had surprised him. The brother of our informant lay inside,



grievously wounded with a bayonet stab received the day before at Nandyme. "*Vuelvete ! vuelvete !*" urged our friend, as he surveyed the party: "*Mataron á todos los Americanos !*"

Here we were in a pretty plight. But we had chosen the chance, and now to return by the main road, with the mud up to our horses' bellies, was terrible to contemplate. There was but short time for consultation ; a bright-eyed little *chico* now made his appearance in great terror from the upper road, shouting to his companions of the house,

"*Vienen ! vienen !*" (they are coming!) "*Cuidado !*" (look out!) and dodged into the thicket.

Believing discretion to be the better part of valor, at least in this instance, we rode into the woods, and, getting about half a mile off the road, sent back our guide by a circuitous path to observe their movements. In ten minutes he returned. It appeared there were seventy or eighty of them, nearly all drunk, and the officer closely questioning the boys as to the passage of a party of Americans with dispatches for Castellon. The whole truth then flashed upon me ; notice had been sent to Granada from Rivas of our intended journey to Leon, and hence the anxiety to secure us. To hazard a fight with our few natives against such odds was impossible, and to boldly face the matter out would at least have insured our arrest and detention at Granada, where an *accidental* shot might put us out of trouble, as had already occurred to a foreigner carried thither in a similar way, to say nothing of the letters from the Californian authorities acknowledging the Castellon cause, directed to the President, and, lastly, my belt of doubloons, the loss of which would have been an equally emphatic terminus to the enterprise.

We held a hurried consultation, and finding our American resident friends determined not to place their already forfeited lives in the power of the enemy, we turned back toward Rivas, audibly cursing the *Chamoristos*, and resolving to await the arrival of a vessel at San Juan del Sur for Realejo, should it cost us a month's time.

Antonio was sent back to watch the movements of the troops, and, continuing our slow tramp through the mud, we halted about 11 o'clock at the hacienda of San Francisco, where we found our guide had already arrived by a westerly path. The

place was inhabited by women, who showed us no particular good-will, though they offered us shelter there for the night. All were busily engaged in making *tortillas* before a bright fire, the more comfortable from the pitiless rain which now poured down from a leaden sky. The hacienda—the property of a leading Chamorro man—had long been known as the headquarters of that party along the road, and the doctor viewed the bread-making with great suspicion, as evidence of the expected arrival of a number of visitors. Who these were likely to be, the troops in our rear seemed to indicate; so, after a hasty supper of *tortillas*, we resumed the march, passing the same night through Pueblo Nuevo and Obraje, and arriving at Rivas in the midst of a soaking rain an hour before daylight. We had previously dispatched Antonio to the town to warn the little garrison, and already, through the darkness and mist, could be seen, as we re-entered the town, squads of troops arriving hastily from San Jorge, Virgin Bay, Obraje, and Potosí. Dr. Cole had his mules packed for flight, and, to judge from the saddled horses standing around the Plaza, a general stampede was meditated.

We had ridden nearly twenty-four hours, not at the easy hand-gallop which, with its cradle-like motion, a comfortable saddle, and even road, create the essence of hearty pleasure and exhilaration, but painfully plodding through a miry waste, without food, drenched with rain, and our limbs aching with the monotonous motion of a mule-walk, one of the most tiresome I can call to memory.

It was with no ordinary satisfaction that we threw ourselves upon the floor of the doctor's house and fell into a heavy slumber, from which rest not even the skipping regiments of fleas, nor the lusty chanting of game-cocks, who commenced their matutinal hymns just as we arrived, could awaken us.

## CHAPTER III.

A Visit to the Commandante Militar.—Good-by to Rivas.—San Juan del Sur again.—The “Tres Amigos.”—At Sea on the Coast of Nicaragua.—Fellow-passengers.—Morning.—Port of Realejo.—The Town.—Convent of San Francisco.—Hidden Treasures.—Ride to Chinandega.—Arrival.—Reception at house of Señor Montealegre.—Novel method of Taxation.—Thunder-storm.—A Morning Bath.—Foreign Prejudices.—A Nicaraguan Elysium.

THE sun was streaming full through the heavily-barred window when C—— aroused us with the report of his pistol. The events of the night, with the dull sense of aching bones, and drowsy ideas of dark, muddy roads and hostile “greasers,” coupled with the sudden discharge of the weapon, made us imagine a surprise from the enemy. All sprang to their feet, but found that our friend had only been amusing himself at our expense. Refreshed with our short nap, we repaired to the cuartel, where we found the commandante with his usual placid smile. He gave us a sinister look as we entered, too plainly betokening the source from whence the information had been forwarded of our intended journey to Leon. I was on the point of waiving formalities and charging home the treachery which had nearly resulted in our capture, when Doctor Davis, foaming like a wild boar, entered the apartment. Enraged as we all were, we gladly made room for the superior volubility of our friend, whose gigantic proportions and known ferocity of character had already made him an object of fear and slavish admiration among the natives. For five minutes did the wrathful doctor rage about the room, and it was curious to observe the wonder-stricken faces of the guard peering into the place, and listening with respectful awe to the deep-mouthed maledictions of our champion. It was in vain that the wily commandante fawned and proffered *cigarros*; his perfidy was too apparent. The last remark made by the doctor as we left the room was accompanied with a significant motion across his throat, to which the commandante made no reply but by a grim and sickly smile.

Following the example of the population, and this time hav-

ing our *ariero* on the hip by refusing to pay him until he placed our baggage in San Juan, we left the town on the following morning, and, arriving at Virgin Bay, returned the dispatches confided to us by Judge Cushing, who quietly remarked, as I briefly recounted the events of the journey, that he had counted upon seeing us return two days sooner than we did. At noon the next day we were again in sight of San Juan del Sur, and our little party uttered an exclamation of delight as, winding out of the woods, we saw a fine, taunt-looking schooner at anchor in the Bay. We now found that Mr. Matsell, with his friends the Dardanos, had pursued their original design of going to Realejo, a boat from Salinas Bay having fortunately touched at San Juan on her way up the coast.

Three days in San Juan, without even the temporary excitement of the transit of passengers to enliven its dull monotony, caused us to hail with pleasure the animated announcement from Mr. Craigmiles, her supercargo, that we must go at once on board. We were not long, with the assistance of a few *reals*, in getting our baggage on board, and, much to our surprise, we found the crew already heaving up the anchor—an instance of punctuality and dispatch we had little expected, and which we hailed as a new era in the dilatory affairs of our journey. A fresh land-breeze filled the sails, and in an hour the town of San Juan, with its slowly-constructing mole, primitive huts, and the uninviting white and red hotels and saloons, became a faint line in the horizon.

The name of our vessel was the *Tres Amigos*, a stout old schooner of about 100 tons, whose many voyages along the Central American coast had made her, as the supercargo asserted, "her own best pilot, entering the usual ports by instinct." Captain San Antonio, a native of Costa Rica, disdained the use of compass or quadrant, while his coffee-colored fingers were guiltless of ever having traced a course on chart, or held in their greasy clutch the useless dividers. He ran his vessel, as he informed me was customary in this trade, entirely by the headlands and stars, these latter celestial luminaries, during the greater part of the year, studding the calm, unclouded heavens, and guiding the mariner, in the absence of the moon, with unerring accuracy. The *rote*, or noise of the surf, is the usual scapegoat



on dark nights. Some forty passengers were on board, two of them—Señores Mateo Saens and Antonio Martines— young priests of Leon, who now, since the death of Don Jorge Viteri, Bishop of Leon, were returning from the ceremonies of ordination performed for them at San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, by the bishop Anselmo Llorente. The remainder were *Guatemaltecos* returning home from Costa Rica.

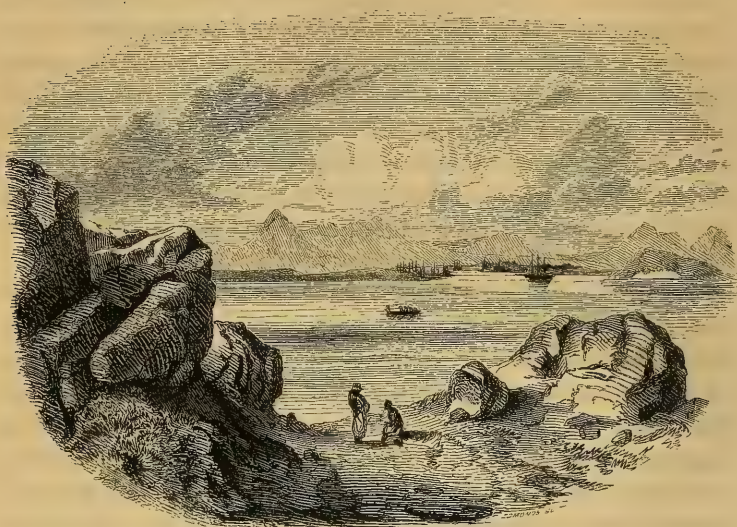
Our passage, owing to light winds and calms, occupied two days and nights. The little vessel, crowded from stem to stern, seemed, with the incessant converse of the natives, more like an overgrown hen-coop than a "packet." At night, the few berths in the cabin being pre-empted by the burliest of them, the remainder spread their *ponchos* upon the deck, a far pleasanter resting-place than the contracted quarters below, hot with the vapor of foul breaths, and the little air struggling for admittance down the companion-way expelled by the closely-shut hatch.

With the idle sails hanging straight above our heads, each lay and watched the mast-heads describe erratic courses among the stars until lulled to sleep by the monotonous flapping. No sound was heard but the regular breathing of the slumberers. Even the helmsman, yielding to the drowsy inclination, loosened his rigid grasp upon the spokes, and, leaning over the wheel, dreamed away the silent hours. The night was absolutely calm; new and strange constellations glittered along the heavens; the north star, the centre of their revolving motion, now close to the horizon, and dimly defined in the lustrous mist, hanging like transparent amber above the ocean. Far inland through the night came the sullen roar of the surf breaking on the beach, while the distant outline of mountains loomed up like spectral giants through the darkness. One of the priests, unable to sleep, passed me, and, observing my eyes open, proffered me a cigar, which I lit by the glowing one he held between his fingers. Formalities thus broken, he was shortly recounting his adventures in Guatemala, and in return I gave him a description of the great inventions of the day now in common use in the United States. His ideas, however, were Guatemalan and English, and believing that but one country in the world was in advance of his own in the arts of progress, I ceased my attempt. Like most Guatemalans, whose connection with the

English has prejudiced them against every thing American, my companion had been taught to regard the United States as a thriving country, and commendably ambitious to assume a leading position among nations, but as yet in a comparatively colonial position with England. The names of our most illustrious men after the glorious phalanx of the Revolution he was entirely unacquainted with, and admitted that, beside the few historical works he had seen on the United States, his ideas of the Northern Republic had been gleaned from the Mexican publications, which regularly found their way to Guatemala. He was one of the few educated men I encountered in the country, and displayed an anxiety for information, with an unassuming gentlemanly demeanor, very engaging after the uncultivated boors I had met in Nicaragua. My clerical friend had with him a copy of Chesterfield's Letters, translated into Spanish, and published in Mexico. These he seemed to value very highly, and assured me he was attempting to mould his views and actions by these models.

As we awoke on the morning of the second day, the rainbow hues of the dawn were shooting athwart the sea from among the frowning gulleys and peaks of El Viejo. A gentle breeze from seaward just distended the dew-dampened sails, the schooner cutting her way leisurely toward an indentation in the coast which our laconic skipper called "Punta Caca." A long cloud of smoke from Monotombo, wreathed into feathery, fantastic figures, stretched with wonderful distinctness against the glimmering horizon, while the expanse of foliage, extending toward us from the foot of El Viejo, sparkling in the splendors of the morning, seemed to invite us to enter their delicious shades. Along the shore, a line of foam showed where the restless surf spent its fury, and north and south, as far as the eye could reach, lofty volcanic cones, blue as indigo, lifted their peaks into the clouds, and exposed their rugged edges against the flashing sky. It was a sight which has ineffaceably impressed itself on my memory, and even the natives, used to the gorgeous beauty of Central American scenery, aroused themselves from their habitual stupor, and drawled out "*que galan la manana!*"

With a freshening breeze we passed the island of Cordon, forming the entrance, and in a few moments let go the anchor in



ENTRANCE TO THE PORT OF REALEJO.

the harbor of Realejo, the solitary Pacific port of Nicaragua, and rendered memorable in history by the exploits of the buccaneers of the seventeenth century.

During the summer of 1851, with the establishment of the Nicaraguan route through Granada and Realejo, it was supposed this port would resume its ancient position in the commercial world. The most insane speculations in land and the grandest plans of improvement were projected. With the withdrawal of the steamers, Realejo subsided into the state of listless inactivity from which the contact with Americans had galvanized it, and, excepting the remembrance of the stirring days of the "Transit Route," with the attendant filching of dimes from *los Yankees*, the temporary prosperity of the place has departed.

The possibility of its becoming the Pacific terminus of the inter-oceanic canal, which for centuries has been the drowsy theme of speculation for every maritime government in Christendom, gives the harbor of Realejo yet some little value in the eyes of the world. But since the rejection, by the English capitalists, of Colonel Child's survey, in which the canal was proposed of such dimensions as to preclude the possibility of a modern clipper ship crossing the continent, attention seems, by



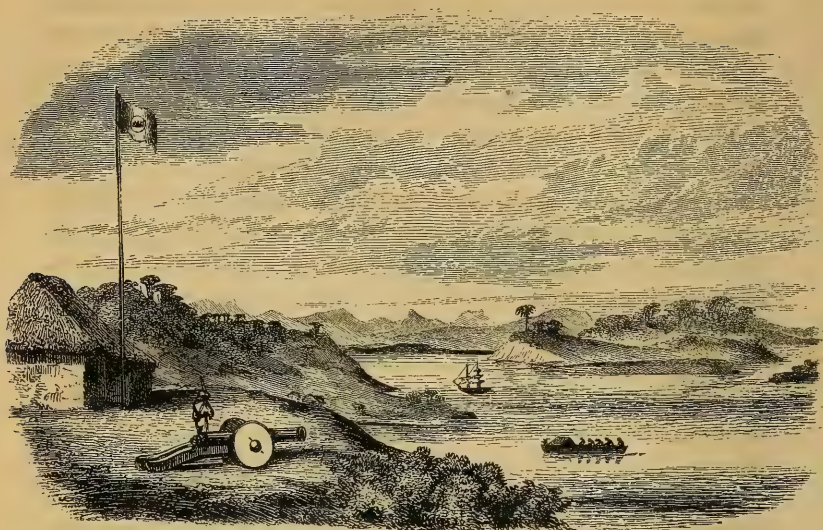
common consent, to have been withdrawn from the great project. The perfection to which Lieutenant Maury has brought the art of navigation has also demonstrated the fact that the voyage to India would not be shortened by the canal. A project, for the control of which the nations of Europe have eyed the Central American isthmus with the keenest jealousy, and for which the commercial rivalry of England and the United States had nearly brought them into belligerent attitudes, has been abandoned as impracticable, or, at least, as either uncalled for by the requirements of commerce, or, under the estimates of the great capitalists, as an unremunerative speculation.

The distance from the port to the town of Realejo is about two leagues, the accommodations for the passage consisting of a diminutive dingy, owned by two youngsters, who, placing our baggage in a large boat, to follow more leisurely, plied themselves to their task, and half an hour of rowing took us so far beyond the first bend of the river as to shut out the ocean, and render the roar of its mighty surf but a confused murmur from among the trees. The tide was fast flowing as we shot through long and silent reaches of water, reflecting in its glassy surface the banks of jungle skirting the river on either side.

About three miles up we passed the ruins of a small fort, on the southern bank, said to have been erected by the buccaneers in some of their descents upon the country. Its piles of stone, among which, and the masses of weeds and grass covering them, the tide ebbs and flows, brought vividly to mind the terrific fights and ruthless cruelties practiced by these hardy sea-rovers, and the feeble race upon whom they directed their attacks. Up these waters the old marauding leader guided his bearded band, and, entering Realejo, sacked the city, then containing fifteen thousand inhabitants, and departed with scarcely the loss of a man.

Within a mile of Realejo an artificial channel has been cut by the Padre Remijia Salazar, whose many acts of benevolence have endeared him to all classes, and rendered him almost an object of worship among them. Our boat scraped the bottom as we pushed through, and a few minutes afterward, rounding a point of dense woodland, apparently well adapted to the cultivation of all the tropical productions, we ran alongside a small,





LANDING AT THE PORT OF REALEJO.

half-decayed wharf extending into the middle of the creek, and forming the landing-place to the town.

We sprang ashore, and, thanking our stars that we had reached the northern part of the state so easily, made our way to a hotel kept by a blustering Englishman, who welcomed us to his house with the easy familiarity characterizing those who deal particularly with seamen. Our baggage lagged behind for inspection at the custom-house, the force at that establishment and at the *cuartel* adjoining it amounting to two lean negroes and a smart-looking native officer, whose polite salutation as we approached, added to a dash of regimental finery about his neatly-fitting pantaloons and jacket, made us regard him with more than ordinary favor.

Realejo, as it is, may be seen to satiety in an hour. We remained there just long enough to chat with the Englishman, who knew nothing about the history of the place anterior to the establishment of the Transit Route, and evidently supposed it to have been founded at that epoch! and to enter into a conversation with the solitary padre of the place, who, delighted at the prospect of an audience, commenced a detailed narration of the founding of the city in the sixteenth century, the former glory

of its convent and its buildings, the incursions of the *flibusters*, and the gradual decay of the place under the Spanish rule. The old native stoutly affirmed that a large treasure was buried among the ruins of the convent of San Francisco, a part of which had been found, and that Don Julio Balcke, a German gentleman with whom I afterward became acquainted, had purchased the land upon which the convent stood for \$4000, intending, when labor was cheaper, to have the ground upturned in quest of the doubloons. Mr. Balcke confirmed the statement subsequently, and assured me that sums of money had been found in and around the ruins. We walked leisurely through them, and marked the quick sinking to decay which, in this climate, attends works of human labor. Even the ponderous blocks of stone in the tower-walls, left standing by the destroyers, had been displaced by the invading jungle, which, attaining in this prolific soil a rapidity of growth unknown in colder climates, from shrubs, become, in a few years, great trees, disjoining and throwing down the solid masonry in their resistless progress. But a few years will suffice for these silent agents to overgrow even the remnants yet existing to mark the former wealth and splendor of the San Franciscan convent. Realejo now contains three thousand inhabitants, and the only building making the slightest claim to architectural pretensions is the church of San Benito. It has some commercial importance, being the sea-port of Leon, Chinandega, and the great agricultural district included between the foot-hills of the Segovia and Chontales mountains and the Pacific—the prolific country known as the great plain of Leon. No statistics have been kept at Realejo during the last three years of revolutionary wars, so that the exports and imports of the place are mere matters of conjecture.

I had been accompanied from California by the son of a gentleman of Chinandega, Don Mariano Montealegre. His arrival from *el Norte* was hailed throughout Realejo with the vociferous congratulations of his many acquaintances, and, introducing S—e C—— and myself to the groups who clustered around him, we soon found ourselves objects of special attention.

Horses were procured for Don Mariano and myself, my two companions remaining at Realejo to stay by the baggage, which

could not be transported until the following day ; so, bidding my first temporary adieu to these friends since our departure together from San Francisco, I accepted the invitation of Don Mariano, and, splendidly mounted on one of his father's numerous horses, galloped with him out of the place by the road to Chinandega.

It required but a minute's ride to carry us beyond the precincts of the dirty little town into a country beautiful beyond any I had ever known, and at every turn disclosing fresh views of rural magnificence which, much as I had been prepared for the scene, took me entirely by surprise. Every other tree bore a fruit, a flower, or was a valuable dye-wood ; almost every shrub was medicinal. Here the catholicon spreads its roots ; the ceiba, the guapinol, palm, tamarind, orange, plantain, banana, fig, and dozens of others familiar to the eye, display their fruits among the leaves by the wayside, and, hanging in tempting clusters from the branches, invite the traveler to taste their luscious sweets. The cactus, that in less genial climes raises its puny head three feet after a course of hot-house and tender nursing, grows here to the height of thirty feet, without a branch, and thick as a man's body. Fences for miles are built of this green mass, in many places mixed with the lighter shade of the castor-oil plant, the clustering beans at a distance resembling bunches of unripe grapes. These fences are actually the most durable in the world, becoming every year more impenetrable, and springing up in endless quantities.

The road, leading through a level country, wound romantically through such scenes as these, while the dust, of which all visitors here complain in the summer months, was now laid by the constant rains, though the roads were not injured by them, caratones or ox-wagons passing from the port to Realejo throughout the year. The soil is a black loam, from five to eight feet deep, and producing two crops annually. Many products grow spontaneously. The eye is constantly feasted with the most charming prospects and romantic views, most of them terminating with the rich, velvety green of some volcano, sloping gradually down from the base of its perfect cone into the broad level of the plain.

The few persons we met on the road either stopped to con-



gratulate Don Mariano on his return, or, if strangers to him, obsequiously exchanged salutations as they passed. The habitual politeness of the Central American has been frequently noticed. It is a feature distinguishing them from the off-hand, business-like carelessness of the Anglo-Saxon. This is particularly the case among the lower classes, who, with all their ultra republican notions, have not been able to conquer an almost servile deference to apparent superiority in dress, appearance, or manner. Not to receive a respectful, if not hearty obeisance from a stranger when traveling is the exception to the rule.

Our ride through the fairy-like scenes of the Chinandega road occupied about an hour, when the increased number of houses and barking of dogs showed that we were in the immediate suburbs of a town; and while a few heavy drops of rain, assisted by the muttered thunders around El Viejo, warned us of the approaching *chubasco*, we spurred into the paved streets of Chinandega, and, passing groups of Don Mariano's acquaintances, rode to the family mansion, forming the corner of two wide, well-paved streets, and near the principal church of the place. The town stands upon a plain about three miles from the slope of El Viejo, and has been for some years one of the most prosperous places of Central America, not having, like Leon, suffered from the destruction of its houses and public buildings in the Revolution. We were here in the month of September, which, being near the closing period of the rains, is reckoned the pleasantest in the year.

We dismounted at the door, from which several servants came forward to receive our horses, while from the spacious *sala* within a crowd of relatives rushed out with the enthusiastic greetings peculiar to the warm blood of the Spanish American, and dragged Mariano into the house, loading him with caresses.

In a few words my companion explained to his mother and sisters that the stranger was his friend, when I was formally introduced, and the house placed "at my disposition," the usual method of recommending one to make himself at home. The residence of Señor Montealegre is actually the largest and most costly in the town, though not so well furnished with the modern improvements as that of Mr. Thomas Manning, British consul at Leon. The señor himself arrived shortly after, and re-



newed the hospitable welcome extended by the mistress of the house. The private parlor, or sitting-room, into which we retired, seemed to contain the most valuable articles of the family. Here was the library of religious and historical works, most of them published and bound in Barcelona. A Yankee clock, which no hand but that of the master of the house might venture to wind, stood upon a table, which also contained the writing materials and business papers, this room also being used as the office for the transaction of the business of the several haciendas of which Señor Montealegre is the owner. Numerous colored engravings hung around the neatly-papered walls, and near the door was suspended a representation of Rubens's Crucifixion in life-size, and which my host said was executed in Guatemala; the coloring was very creditable, and would have created remark in any part of the world. Across the room was suspended the universal hammock of *pita*, fabricated of stained cords artfully interwoven, and forming the arm-chair or lounging-place, to which the stranger is courteously invited as a mark of respect. The tidily-swept floors, and the neatness displayed throughout the establishment, betrayed the hand of woman, without whose aid the best ordered household will fall into disorder.

Señor Montealegre at this time was counted the wealthiest man in Chinandega, and during our stay at his house we had an opportunity of observing the arbitrary method pursued by the fluctuating government of the state to raise money in support of the revolutions. The day after our arrival, the house was surrounded by the troops of the Revolutionists, who ferociously excluded the family from holding any intercourse with the outer world until the sum of five thousand dollars was contributed toward supporting the new administration. On the same evening the sum was paid, and I was assured that this was the fourth successful attempt of the kind since the commencement of the war. Several other wealthy families had been assessed according to their supposed means, and all looked forward with gloomy forebodings to the future. My host believed that the present revolution would completely ruin him. Only the property of foreign residents was respected, or that placed under the protection of the French, English, or American consular

flags. For this reason, Don Mariano had been dispatched to San Francisco, with the view of alienating himself to the United States, and thus preserving a tithe of the family possessions. Even this expedient had failed, and there seemed no hope but in the success of either party, which would put an end for the time to the war.

With such unjust and summary methods of taxation, there is little to wonder at in the constant fear entertained by the people of the chieftains, political and military, whose intrigues and dissensions have deluged the land with blood, and destroyed all semblance of industrial pursuits. Nevertheless, the old gentleman was a sturdy and uncompromising Liberal, whose recollection dated back to the quiet days of the Spanish rule, when, under the viceroyalty of Guatemala, the nation had at least enjoyed commercial security, and feared no enemies but those who threatened the mother country beyond the limits of Central America. He referred to the days of Morazan, whom he remembered with enthusiastic pleasure, and his fine features lighted up as he recalled the stirring wars of 1839-40. Señor Montelegre was the first veritable specimen of a Central American *hacendador* that I had met in the country.

At night the family collected, according to custom, in the library, where I recounted to the old man the news from California and of the European war, of which he had not heard for some months. A cautiously-worded remark led me to believe that my host was strongly in favor of the Russian cause, though he seemed yet to entertain the habitual respect, if not fear, of the English name, prompting him to confine to a hint any opinions he might entertain against them. This, however, may have been his habitual manner of expressing himself. A room was finally shown me, containing a bed with the luxury of clean sheets. As I straightened myself out with that sensation of extreme comfort they only can appreciate who have long been deprived of them, I wondered when I should again enjoy the same pleasure; for all agreed that, after leaving the well-settled district of Nicaragua, I might bid adieu to the common comforts of life. I found eventually, however, that the Central Americans are generally quite ignorant of the country beyond their native state. I had hardly composed myself to sleep, after blowing out my

candle, when the muttering of distant thunder and the blue gleam of lightning through the chinks of the door announced the approach of one of the sudden violent storms which mark the breaking up of the rainy season. Soon the pattering of warning drops was followed by a deluge of water, producing a deafening noise upon the roof, while the broad lightning-sheets, illumining the sky from horizon to zenith, seemed to hiss with fiery tongues through the grated windows. The sudden blaze was succeeded by the blackest darkness, and followed by such tremendous peals of thunder as seemed to be tumbling about our ears the peaks of the surrounding volcanoes. I felt certain that some building near by had been struck with lightning, which on the following day proved to be the case ; this, however, is of frequent occurrence.

The Nicaraguans are generally early to bed and early risers, a habit to be applauded, as it enables them to enjoy the delightful cool of the morning, when the greater part of the day's household labor is performed. When I awoke I found Mariano moving silently about my room, and, perceiving that I was awake, he suggested a bath in a brook near by, which he said he had used from his infancy. The crowing of cocks, barking of dogs, added to the loud voice of the señora, should have aroused me an hour before ; but, springing out of bed, and throwing on a few clothes, I joined my good-natured friend, and together we issued from the house. A more glorious morning never graced the earth. The streets, washed perfectly clean with the deluge of the night, seemed as if recently swept by the hand of some tidy housewife. The garden foliage, peeping in verdant luxuriance over the high walls, was yet dripping with millions of sparkling rain-drops, glittering in the slant rays of the sun. The air was fresh and invigorating, and so cool that I could scarcely believe myself between the tropics. To the northward, and apparently rising in silent majesty over the verdure-clad plain around us, towered the volcano of El Viejo, its lofty head reared against a cloudless sky, and glowing with the variety of shades of green packed in dense masses along its steep declivities. The town was already astir, and a few minutes' brisk walking brought us to the spring, from time immemorial the bathing-place of the *Chinandeguenses*.

A difficulty, however, presented itself, which, to my unsophisticated mind, seemed an insuperable one. The stream, spreading itself out into a deep, clear basin, some twelve yards wide, again formed a washing brook below, and among the rocks were stationed a crowd of *lavadoras*, old and young, who seemed to have possession of the premises. I hinted my objection to Mariano, but with a quiet smile he proceeded to undress and plunge in, followed by half a dozen new-comers, with as much unconcern as they would have exhibited in the midst of a forest. The proceeding created no sensation among the soap and water congregation below, and at last, yielding to the temptation of cool, clear water, I was soon breasting the tiny waves created by the current. Modesty in these respects meets with little appreciation in Central America, though the refusal of a stranger to bathe after the custom of the country is generally regarded as a queer fashion he has brought with him from abroad, and which time will gradually show him the folly of.

On our return, we found the table spread for breakfast in the great corridor. The repast consisted of hot *tortillas*, biscuit, butter, and cheese, stewed meat, beans, cocoa, and milk. A graceful little Indian girl, with large hazel eyes, and hands and arms which the most aristocratic lady might have envied, waited upon us, and nimbly performed the bidding of Mariano, who, I found, was master of the establishment, being the oldest son. The bare feet of our dusky Hebe pattered over the tiled pavement, and, when breakfast was over, she brought us a basket of delicious fruits and a bundle of *cigarros*. I threw myself back in the great hammock with a sensation of absolute enjoyment, and, gazing out into the dreamy prospect of waving green, the view bounded by the blue cone of some distant volcano, or the white walls of a hacienda half hidden in its own prodigality of verdure, resigned myself to the fascination of the hour, content in all but that dear ones far away might not share with me the matchless beauties of the scene.



## CHAPTER IV.

Chinandega.—Churches.—Dwellings.—Female Beauty.—Dress.—Smoking Cigarros.—Religion.—Ceremonies.—Amusements.—Evening Paseo.—Night.—The Tienda.—Trade.—Education.—Start for Leon.—The Road.—Chichigalpa.—Tiste.—Mr. Manning.—Posultega.—La Posada.—A Nicaraguan Belle.—Novel method of Begging.—El Aguacero.—Hacienda de Paciente.—Drunk-en Soldiers.—Las Tortilleras.—Rio Quisaluague.—Approach to Leon.—Bells.—Religious Ceremony.—Dr. Livingston.—Independent Evening.

CHINANDEGA is counted the most thriving city of Nicaragua, and, though formerly much more populous than at present, contained, at the time of my visit, about twelve thousand inhabitants, the number of women, owing to causes already explained, predominating as four to one. The town is regularly laid out, the streets running at right angles, handsomely paved, and forming a convex surface, the gutter or water-course being in the centre of the street, and during the rainy season bearing a luxuriant growth of grass, so few are the encroaching footsteps. Its early importance, to judge from the description of Central American writers, must have been considerable. It now contains five churches—La Paroquia, Calvario, San Antonio, San Lorenzo (unfinished), and Guadalupe. These were formerly richly adorned, and are said to have contained ornaments of immense value; but the incursions of the buccaneers, and the devastating revolutions sweeping over the country since 1821, have caused their removal, either by violence or for their security. At present, the churches contain nothing beyond worthless tinsel and rudely-executed paintings upon scriptural subjects. These edifices are of adobe, plastered and whitewashed in the usual Spanish style, and often with the peculiar rounded dome betraying the Moorish architecture. The floors are handsomely paved, and the interiors are kept neatly painted and cleanly. Images of saints and angels, gaudily attired to impress the imagination of the devout, are placed in the niches. I should think the quiet and solemnity of these sanctuaries well calculated to inspire devotional thoughts. They are usually dark,

spacious buildings, echoing the footfall ; and at all hours of the day kneeling figures of men and women may be seen, the latter with the gaudy *mantilla* thrown like a cowl over the head, and the former generally neatly clad, hat in hand, *sin zapatos*, and resting upon a handkerchief spread on the pavement. All distinctions of class are banished in the Church, and the shriveled, blear-eyed beggar kneels in close proximity to the pale and aristocratic señorita of the best blood in Chinandega. The city seems to have suffered less from the frequent wars than any other in the state. The houses are seldom of more than one story, not so much because of the fear of earthquakes as from the superior coolness of a low-built residence, the dislike of existing near a roof, and, lastly—and which I believe to be the prevailing reason—because their *antepasados*, or ancestors, lived in houses of similar architecture. The dwellings do not differ materially from those of Rivas, but are usually in better repair, larger, and of handsomer construction. The interior is furnished scantily with rather uncomfortable angular furniture, placed about the room as though against the wishes of the occupants, and, in fact, tables are not in use for other purposes than to serve the family repasts, or—very rarely—to write upon ; and among the ladies I found even the chair only a matter of conventionality to be used in company, the señorita infinitely preferring a seat on the floor or a comfortable lounge in the family hammock, which is suspended across the room in the dwellings of all classes. Religious pictures, a bed—sometimes a foreign portable iron one—and commonly a number of Mexican trunks, elaborately ornamented with brass nails and the owners' initials, complete the furniture of each room. The houses, however, are admirably adapted to the climate, and the pedestrian enters their dark, cool shelter with an inward "*gracias a Dios !*" from the broiling heat of the street, augmented by the universal glistening white walls, reflecting the rays of the sun with painful force.

The dwelling usually forms two or more sides of a hollow square called the *patio*, commonly communicating with the street by a paved side entrance capable of admitting a horseman or *caraton* and oxen ; and here the produce from the hacienda, or any articles or goods whatever belonging to the family,

are bestowed. The corridor, extending around the interior of the house, is generally raised a few feet above the yard, and is paved with large flag-stones. The houses, walls, and all buildings attached, are roofed with tiles, in all respects better adapted to the climate than shingles or slate. A store-room and other household apartments lead off from the corridor. Many of the buildings have large flower-gardens attached, separated from the street by a lofty wall, and crammed with the greenest shrubbery, among which may be always noted the mango-tree in blossom or loaded with fruit the entire year, their dark limbs creeping among and supporting the load of leaves, while at the taper ends bunches of this luscious fruit offer themselves to the passer-by.

Although I was disappointed in my expectations of female beauty among the Nicaraguans, yet, during my stay in Chinandega and Leon, I met very many instances of the grace and elegance generally attributed to the Spanish *señorita*. The habit of intermarrying practiced by whites, Indians, *mestizos*, and even negroes, has done much to deteriorate female beauty in Central America, and this I found to be particularly the case in Honduras; but throughout that republic, as well as in Nicaragua, I often saw faces and forms which would have created "a sensation" in the most elegant assemblage. The amalgamation has not been universal; and while by far the largest number are found only tinged with a dash of Indian or negro blood, the stranger may meet at every hour with pure Castilian beauties, whose fine forms, lady-like manners, black, languishing eyes, and expressive faces, fully warrant the encomiums lavished upon them. The features are almost, without exception, good, and where there has been no mixture of races in the ancestry, even classic, preserving much of the haughty, *distingué* air of the Castilian. The complexions, always pale (a rosy New England cheek is a phenomenon only known from hearsay), are of that rich and classic hue generally attractive in youth when accompanied by finely-chiseled features, but turning into the waxy look in advanced years. In no country that I have visited does age follow so closely upon womanhood, nor in any do the charms of youth more quickly fade. The climate leaves none of the traces of healthy, venerable old age; and with few exceptions in

the lowlands of Nicaragua, to be old is to be ugly. In both sexes, however, I have always observed among all classes the traces of that native courtesy and grace of manner always atoning for the lack of personal charms. The politeness of the educated classes amounts to formality, and in the more secluded sections of Honduras this is observed to such a painful degree as to become almost ridiculous. The young men are generally reserved, listless, and of a sallow complexion; nearly all of them are of slender form, and dress after the American and European fashion.

Bright colors are preferred for dresses by the ladies, and at a fiesta, or on Sunday at mass, the combination of rainbow hues, regardless of taste, would create a smile in a Northern belle. The shawls are particularly gaudy. But the effect is not unpleasing in a large congregation, with a battery of fine features and flashing eyes as a relief to the gay colors. It is a mistaken idea, however, that the Spanish beauty generally affects finery. Except at public assemblages she dresses in black, as an offset to the complexion, and the studied arrangement of jet ornaments upon the arms and around the neck betrays an appreciation of the effects of contrast. *Dulces*, or confectionery, made from the sugar of the country, is in great demand among the ladies, who eat them at all hours of the day; with these, the everlasting *abanico*, the *paseo* at sunset, and an evening call, perhaps, across the Plaza, constitute the amusement, if not the occupation, of the Nicaraguan lady, unless when an approaching *funcion* urges to the preparation of some extra finery. I should also add the rolling of paper cigars, called *cigarros*, in distinction to *puros*, the name given par excellence to the cigar proper. These are smoked every where and upon all occasions. You enter the house of a gentleman, and he hastens to offer you the hammock and a *cigarro*. It is held between the lips of the padre a moment before entering the church; it is the symbol of friendship extended to a new acquaintance: a lady, desirous of doing the amiable to the stranger, proffers him a *cigarro*; you call upon the president, and, before entering into the compliments of the day, he selects a *cigarro* from his *tabaquera*, and politely presents it; your servant on the road deliberately rolls up a *cigarro*, and, striking fire with his *eslabon*, proffers it to



you with stoical silence, as a matter of course ; and, in a word, in all grades of society, at all times, in all places, this social little emblem of comfort is exchanged ; and I verily believe, such is the force of habit, that a negotiation opened with this preliminary is considered as already half completed.

The Catholic religion reigns supreme in Nicaragua and throughout Central America. So deeply rooted is the power of the Church and priesthood, that it forms the basis upon which all extraordinary political movements are made—the priests in some way always influencing. It is a special clause in most of the constitutions of the various republics that the Roman Catholic religion shall be that of the people, to the exclusion of all others ; and attempts hitherto made in negotiations for settlements on the coast, to erect and worship in other churches than those of the established faith, have ever met with the united opposition of all political parties. This is somewhat owing to the religious veneration instilled into the minds of the people, but mainly to the fact that the legislative bodies are mostly composed of lawyers or *licenciados* educated in the Catholic universities of Guatemala or Costa Rica, or, as is often the case, by the priests themselves.

The exaggerated forms with which the padres of the sixteenth century introduced Catholicism into Guatemala are yet witnessed, and such ceremonies as “the hanging of Judas,” plastering ashes upon the forehead on *día cenizas* or Ash-Wednesday, carrying effigies of the Virgin and saints through the streets in public procession, are of frequent occurrence throughout the country. The women, however, are the most faithful to the behests of the Church, and few venture to miss the *misa* or fail to attend the morning service. The public amusements are also so artfully interwoven with all religious ceremonies that they have become inseparable, so that the celebration of certain saints’ days, embracing the observance of special Church rites, is attended with cock-fighting, bull-fights, music, feasting, fireworks, and dancing. It may thus be readily seen, where the only public pleasures of the people are made the means of cementing their allegiance to the Catholic faith, it becomes a powerful instrument in the hands of the priesthood, aided by the inborn superstitions of the race and by the monopoly of education

possessed by the padres or those instructed under their direct influence.

Religious processions are viewed with respectful veneration by the populace. The padre, walking under the sacred canopy held over his head by four attendants, is preceded by a bell-ringer, and the music of violins and bass-voles, which accompany the voice of the priest and the choristers. The numerous ornaments and symbols of the Church are carried in the ranks. The spectacle, even to an unbeliever, is an imposing one, and I never failed to show my respect to the religious forms of the country by lifting my hat as it moved slowly by; but the broadest hints of my native companions could never bring me to my knees, though in all directions, and often for several adjacent streets, wherever the solemn chant of the singers could penetrate, the people were kneeling and devoutly crossing themselves as the clangor of a dozen deep-mouthed bells mingled their noise with the scene. The whole performance seemed to me the relic of a semi-barbarous age, and yet we find here the same ceremonies performed at which the mail-cased warriors of Alvarado and Cortez were wont to doff their plumed helmets. The remark is true, that Central America has been at a "stand-still" since the Conquest; indeed, many of the primitive habits of the old conquerors still exist.

Chinandega, usually one of the gayest towns of Nicaragua, presented but a sad spectacle during this revolution. All gaiety had ceased, as from general consent. The reunions, which at times enable the stranger to form an idea of the social and domestic qualities of the people, were now unknown; the place was deserted by its principal residents, who had retired to their haciendas to escape assessment, while those of the lower classes who could leave shunned the town to avoid impressment into the army. My acquaintances often regretted the *triste* condition of affairs, and assured me I viewed the town to disadvantage.

In the evening, however, at the dullest season, the observer may obtain a glance at the out-door customs of the people. At this hour the *chubasco* has passed away, leaving a tumble of purple and golden clouds in the western horizon. The shrubbery and streets are yet wet with the rain, glistening in myriad

diamond drops from palm and plantain trees. The houses, rivaling each other in their hues of red, blue, or yellow, according to the taste of the owner, impart a lively character to the scene. The streets, through the heat of the day monopolized by loaded mules or naked children, disputing with the hogs the possession of some coveted nook in which to snooze, now present a more animated picture. At yonder corner a handsomely-mounted cavalier has just reined in his long-tailed, heavily-bit-ted stud. That is Señor V——e, a well-known and respected gentleman, who is now following his immemorial custom of a *paseo a caballo* in the cool of the evening. His silver-mounted saddle and head-stall, the elaborately wrought reins and jingling spurs, with the splendid slashed *serape* thrown negligently over the left shoulder, display the man of taste. He has all the Spaniard's pride in owning handsome horse-accoutrements. He observes our notice, and courteously raises his beaver, at the same time *accidentally* touching his well-trained steed, who starts forward, rears and backs, to the evident satisfaction of his master; but having recently left California, where a five years' residence has shown me some of the finest horsemanship in the world, the feat is rather stale.

Now he is joined by several others, equally well mounted and equipped, and a general raising of *sombreros* to a sallow-visaged belle shows they are not wanting in gallantry. A minute of grave converse, and the whole party are off at a rapid amble, the animals being broken into that peculiar pace, through which they have acquired the name of *andadoras* or rackers. Numerous parties are now venturing out of the shady houses, and sauntering lazily down the streets with the waddling gait never seen out of the region of Spaniards and Italians or their descendants, now stopping to chat a moment with an acquaintance, bent, like themselves, on learning the gossip of the day, or exchanging the revolutionary news with some decrepit *viejo* through the grated bars of the street window. Groups of pot-bellied little children, some boasting a shirt and others in a state of nudity, their skins shining like polished mahogany, are gamboling in the *calle*, while a bevy of straight, well-formed women are lighting their *cigarros* and leisurely gossiping with the mistress of the *posada*. Suddenly the hour of *oracion* is tolled from

the tower of *la Paroquia*. In an instant every voice is hushed; the children cease their frolicking as by instinct; a sudden silence succeeds the temporary bustle, and the moving of lips with the rapid and mechanical muttering of set forms of prayer, are heard from among the uncovered groups. A short pause, and the bells peal out a joyful clang; the conversation and sports are renewed where they had broken off: night approaches; one after another the doors and windows are closed and barred, the streets become deserted, the patrol, with lanterns and muskets, march past to the tap of drum, and at nine o'clock silence reigns over the city, save where, at intervals, the loud cry of "Alerto!" of the sentinels reminds us that, amid all the rural splendor with which Nature has adorned Nicaragua, her sons seem laboring to annul the blessings dispensed by Providence. The solemn peal of the church clock tolls the hour of ten, and as the forked lightnings, which at intervals play in fitful flashes around the peak of the volcano, mingled with the low muttering of distant thunder, announce the approach of the usual nocturnal storm, I close and bar my door, and am soon in the embrace of the drowsy god.

A very commendable custom in Nicaragua, as in all Central America, is that of keeping a small shop in the dwelling—the *tienda*, as it is called—in which the lady of the house usually presides. In this manner many a family, reduced by the revolutions, is partly supported. This has become fashionable from necessity, and the prettiest girls of the country may often be found behind the counters of these little shops dispensing all the common articles of life. The *tienda* is frequently the scene of a love-match, and here, it is said, more scandal and news is retailed than at any other point. The *tienda*, in fact, is the "on 'change" of all classes, and answers for a news exchange, as the country grocery in the United States serves for the discussion of the political items of the day. From causes above explained, it happens that the shop-keepers are mostly women or old men, though there are numerous instances where large retail business is done by importing firms.

Up to 1840, the greater part of the manufactured goods consumed in Nicaragua was imported from England, which for thirty years has enjoyed a monopoly of this lucrative trade. But,



in addition to the Germans and Italians, who have recently become powerful rivals in this business, the trade from California has grown into importance, considerable amounts of manufactured goods and provisions being carried to Central America by a few vessels employed in the trade.

Having letters of introduction to various gentlemen of Leon, I availed myself of the offer of my hospitable entertainer to make use of his favorite *macho*, just brought in from a neighboring hacienda. The señora, with the aid of two or three bustling girls, busied herself on the morning of my departure in preparing some little dainties for the road, and, as a great favor, ordered her own servant, Pablo, to mount a stout little mule and accompany me. My two companions, who had long since arrived from Realejo and installed themselves in the house, preferred to remain. On a bright, fresh morning, with my new servant, I mounted at the door, and in a few minutes had ambled out of the *barrios* of the town, the open road to Leon before us. The distance is some twenty miles, over an almost perfect plain, though somewhat undulating as you approach the capital. Traveling in Central America, in the sierras as well as the low country, is done in the cool of the morning. The señora hastened me off by 8 o'clock, asserting even then that I should be obliged to stop on the road either to avoid the *aguacero* or to escape the fierce rays of the sun. My servant was a native of Leon, and was strongly attached to his native place.

"Every thing," said he, "is to be found in Leon, señor. *Es una ciudad hermosa, aunque en el día muy triste.*"

The ancient feud between Leon and Granada existed still in the mind of my companion, who snapped his fingers derisively at the idea of *los Granadinos* retaining possession of the city another month against the assaults of his townsmen who were then besieging it. About a mile out of the town, he begged I would allow him to stop at a small hacienda on the road, where he had recently made an important purchase; so, turning into a picturesque, leaf-embowered passage leading from the main road, we came to a small house, where Pablo seemed to possess no little influence. His property proved to be a tough-looking game-cock, which he was pampering for some approaching feast-

day. After taking an affectionate, sidelong survey of his champion, he reluctantly turned again into the highway. The road between Chinandega and Leon is like that already described from Realejo. A ride of about nine miles brought us to the little town of Chichigalpa, containing about two thousand inhabitants. Here is situated one of the oldest churches in the state. The place wore the same silent, deserted aspect of the other towns, and, with the exception of a few staring children, naked and motionless, there appeared no sign of life as we entered. The dwellings are of adobe, unplastered, irregularly built, and without the slightest pretension to symmetry.

We proceeded to the best looking house in the principal street, where we dismounted, and entering, found a number of women spinning and rolling cigarros. They easily fell into conversation, and asked me if I was *el ministro*. The U. S. government had dispatched so many of these honorable emissaries to Nicaragua that every American is regarded as occupying some official capacity. A calabash of *tiste* was quickly made, and, swinging in the comfortable hammock, I was fast forgetting the admonition of Señora Montealegre, when Pablo hinted that we had yet some leagues before us; so, responding to the earnest "*adios*" of the Chichigalpa gossips, we pursued our journey eastward. The road—one of the finest in Nicaragua—is wide and even, and lined with stately trees, under whose grateful shade the traveler passes for the greater part of the way. At this season, however, deep pools of water had collected, obliging the *caratones* to deviate from the main road and penetrate the thickets on either hand.

Half a mile beyond the town I perceived a stout, jolly-looking gentleman approaching, mounted on a strong mule. I judged rightly, from the description given me, that this must be the English consul, Mr. Thomas Manning, to whom I had letters of introduction. Consequently I accosted him, and we were soon exchanging the news. He was *en route* for Realejo, and in a few words gave me the details of the war, and the probable results of the Revolution. Mr. Manning has been a resident of Nicaragua for many years, and has grown rich by means of the advantageous commercial operations offered in the state while his countrymen monopolized its trade. He pointed to a dark blue

horizon of clouds in the south, and advised me to remain over night in the village of Posulteга, a few miles beyond ; then placing his house in Leon at my disposal, he pursued his way. Another half hour brought us to the village, and Pablo led the way to a *posada*, where, alighting, I ordered more *tiste*, the only drink, save *aguardiente*, to be obtained on the road.

Pablo hinted, after I had dismounted, that the belle of Posulteга lived in the *posada*, and, on entering, I found three prettily-dressed girls, one swinging in the hammock, which occupation she did not cease as we entered, except to turn her face toward me and say, "*Adios, caballero !*" and the other two seated at the back door, examining each other's heads. The mother, a garrulous, withered old woman, glanced hastily at her little brood, and, satisfied with their appearance, bid me welcome, and inquired the news from Chinandega. I soon found that the nymph of the hammock was the belle referred to, and, as far as I could judge through the darkness, she made the nearest approach to beauty I had yet seen in the country: fine teeth, dark, clustering hair tastefully arranged, a rich olive complexion, faultless form, large, lustrous eyes, and pretty hands and feet. Pablo gazed in admiration, and I afterward found that the young Leonese was one of half a dozen suitors for her hand. The old woman observed my attention to the girl, and, with an air of pride, asked,

"*Que tal le parece á Vd. mi niña ?*"

I of course was not sparing in my praise, and, in answer to the inquiries of the girls, attempted to give them some idea of the belles of my own country. To these unsophisticated beauties the arts of the toilet and the various appliances of fashionable life were unknown, and they listened with unfeigned wonder to my account of the stay-lacing and tight-boot tortures of gay New York.

Before my departure the party was joined by a grizzly old native, who offered to accompany me on my road, and on my declining his services he asked me for a real in compensation for his kind wishes. I thought this a model method of begging, but, being new in the country, preferred to hand the old fellow the coin, which he received with an audible prayer that "*Dios*" would keep step with me for my kindness. I have no doubt

he laughed at me for an American heretic a moment after my departure; however, I was willing to buy the incident for the low price of *one real*. As I mounted at the door, the old woman told me her name was Benita Ramierez, and that she had long since learned to love *los Americanos*. I made allowance for the education the family had received in their contact with passengers in 1851. No people in the world learn sooner than the Nicaraguans the value of a dollar, and to pass at once from unsophisticated hospitality to the most exacting meanness; but this applies particularly to that class who have become familiar with Americans in the vicinity of the transit routes. The dark-eyed Luisa followed me to the door, and no doubt assured herself of having made one more conquest. One of the oldest churches in Nicaragua (La Quisalqueca) is now in ruins in Posulteга.

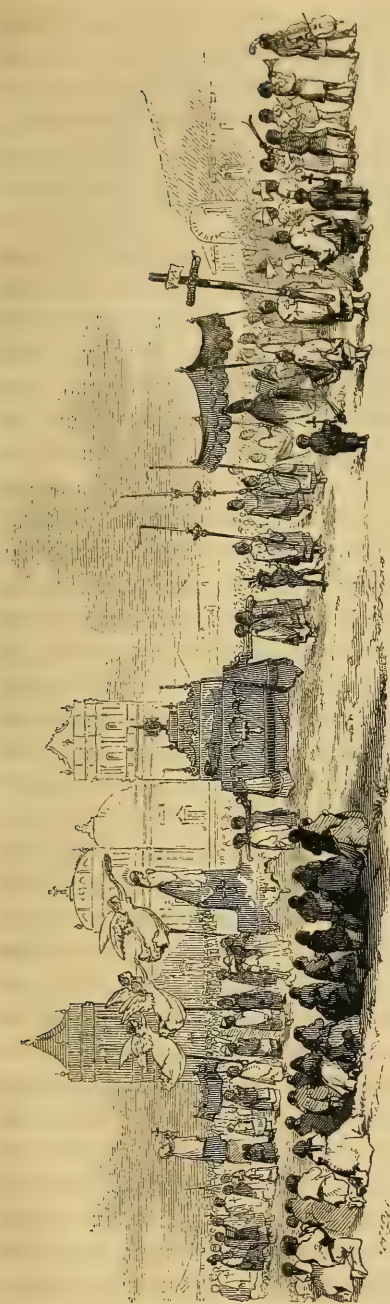
A few minutes after leaving Posulteга, the storm, which for the last two hours had been threatening in the horizon, came pouring down upon us. Pablo said there were no more houses for two leagues on the road, but he knew of a small hacienda to the southward, approached by a path into which we speedily turned, but did not escape being drenched through with a merciless rain. By the time we had reached the hacienda of Paciente, the air was a falling sheet of water. We spurred into the yard and under a sort of shed, where three or four women were making tortillas and grinding *mais*. They welcomed us heartily to their fire. For an hour there seemed no cessation to the rain, which was, as usual, accompanied by loud thunderclaps and vivid lightning. The heaviest and most frequent rains fall in Nicaragua during the months of August and September.

Shortly after our arrival, a party of soldiers, under the command of a fat captain, stopped at the hacienda. They made a company of about twenty, and wore the usual uniform of white with a narrow red stripe on the legs. Drunken, wet, insolent, and with bedraggled finery, they presented a sorry picture. The captain whispered to one of the women, and a moment afterward approached me and asked the hour. Not caring to take out my watch in the presence of the crowd, I replied as briefly as possible, but he insisted on satisfying himself. I threw



back my poncho enough for him to see a large-sized revolver slung at my hip, and which I usually endeavored to conceal. The fellow, who was half drunk, regarded it fixedly for a moment, and then asked, "*Tienes pasaporte?*" I showed him a paper given me by the commandante of Chinandega, which seemed to satisfy him; for, after requesting a light from my cigar, he mounted, and the whole party pursued their way in the rain, yelling as they wheeled around the old adobe, and laughing with drunken phrensy. Pablo exchanged glances with the women, and he assured me that but for the sight of my pistol I would have been robbed. The soldiers were on their way to the *cuartel* of Realejo. Several robberies had been recently committed on the road. I afterward learned that the captain believed me to be a Guatemalan spy.

The women now proceeded with their occupation of making *tortillas*, and an interesting occupation it is. The corn is mixed with a quantity of ley, and boiled for a few minutes over a slow fire. It is then washed, and placed in a pile upon a hollow stone, resembling a small, old-fashioned stool. The corn heaped up at one end has the consistency of boiled hominy. A handful is scraped into the hollow part of the machine, and mashed with a sort of pestle, also of stone. The operation of grinding is somewhat like that of rolling out pie-crust. The paste is next *spatted* into the proper thinness, and baked quickly on a piece of sheet iron or stone. When hot they are very palatable, and in traveling through the country I invariably preferred them to the wheaten bread, which is always ill-made and heavy. The *tortilla* ("*pan del pais*") is found upon every table, among all classes, and constitutes, with *frijoles*, the principal food of the poor throughout Central America. The slow process of grinding the corn practiced by the women has led several foreigners to introduce Indian corn-meal, particularly in haciendas at harvest-time, where the laborers are obliged to await the tardy movements of *las tortilleras*. But, either from prejudice or unwillingness to deviate from established customs, the meal has been every where discarded, and the women stoutly declare it impossible to make *tortillas* in any other than by the ancient method. The picture is not an uninteresting one, to see a well-formed girl, with bare arms, and long, luxuriant hair,



PROCESSION OF HOLY WEEK.

thrown carelessly back from her face, leaning over her work, and at intervals resting from the labor to gossip with her garrulous companions, or give the loud, hearty laugh which distinguishes the Central American women for their hilarity and good nature.

The scenery around Paciente is like that of every hacienda on the great plain of Leon, the immediate view bounded by walls of the greenest verdure, vocal with the song of birds, and spangled with gorgeous flowers. It is only in contemplation of these wondrous beauties of nature that the traveler can forget the squalid ignorance around him; a debased and decadent race, affording the more striking contrast to the luxuriance of the wide-spreading landscape, in which seem concentrated all the choicest gifts of Providence. The rain still poured, and still the monotonous rubbing of the *piedra de moler* mingled with its falling. The yard had become a hissing pond, through

which the girls paddled from house to shed, lifting their skirts, and exhibiting an amusing disregard of mud and wet. At last, tired of the monotony of the scene, and the dull, leaden sky overhead seeming to offer no reasonable promise of revealing a glimpse of blue, I ordered Pablo to saddle the animals, and, despite his warnings of the danger of fever, we splashed out of the yard.

Wrapped in my *poncho*, I slowly followed Pablo along a road now almost impassable with mud. Presently we came to three wooden crosses erected on the wayside, which my companion pointed out as marking the graves of as many robbers, who had been killed a few years before by a party of gentlemen from Leon, headed by Don Francisco Dias Zapato, better known as "Chico Dias." Descending a steep declivity, we came to the River Quisaluague, rising a little above the town of Telica, about eight miles north of Leon. It was now swollen and turbid, and rushed violently among the rocks forming its bed. We forded it about two hundred yards below where we struck it, and rising the opposite bank met a boy, apparently not above six years of age, carrying a load of fagots upon his head, which he put upon the ground in order to make a low bow to me as I passed. His costume consisted of a tattered shirt and a string of glass beads around his neck. He stood and gazed after me as I passed, and, observing me look back, shouted, "*Givy me dime!*" which accounted for his politeness.

We now began to approach Leon, its proximity being indicated by the occasional country people we met trudging silently toward the city. The road for a league was lined with trim fences of cactus and often of wood, inclosing cane and other plantations, interspersed with the brightest foliage. Flocks of paroquets fluttered among the trees, while at intervals along the road stood the solitary white crane, awaiting the approach of his crawling prey. The rain had at last ceased, and with the rays of the sinking sun the country for miles around glowed like some overwrought sunset scene found depicted in artists' studios as fancy paintings. In no part of the world that I have visited have I witnessed the gorgeous sunsets presented in Central America. There seems to be a quality in the atmosphere imparting a clear and brilliant tone to the evening landscape, some-





APPROACH TO LEON.

times witnessed in the mountains of California, but not to my knowledge elsewhere. The great plain over which we had traveled since morning is reckoned the most valuable agricultural land of the state. Not a twentieth part of it is under cultivation, and its capabilities for producing all the tropical staples can scarcely be over-estimated, while by its present owners it seems but the arena for endless strife and bloodshed. As we ascended a small eminence on the road, the towers of the church at Subtiaba, and the cathedral at Leon, overlooking the surrounding woods, reflected the beams of the setting sun. Descending again, we came suddenly upon several girls splashing in a small stream, who disappeared like turtles as we approached, leaving the head above water. The river wound to the left, and after crossing it we overtook a line of *aguadoras*, or water-bearers, entering the city with the night's supply. Tired with my ride, I urged my mule forward, and entered through the *barrios* the long paved street leading eastward toward the Plaza. A white-haired old gentleman, evidently just arisen from his *siesta*, directed me to the house of Dr. Livingston. As we entered the Plaza, the sound of bells with the peculiar Spanish tone brought like a flash to my memory the scenes of Old Spain and the Havana.

The striking of the Spanish bells differs entirely from that of all others. At the sound of their mellow chime, it takes but a



slight tincture of romance to bring up in imagination the haughty mail-clad cavaliers of the sixteenth century, by whose energy and courage these regions were conquered and peopled. Amid these evidences of their race, apparently paling before the advance of civilization, the recollections of legendary lores in old chivalric books, devoured years back with schoolboy eagerness, come crowding up more vividly in view of these time-worn towers rising in quaint and rusty architecture above the churches.

Turning an abrupt corner, the grand Plaza was before me, and standing in its centre the great Cathedral of San Pedro, the corner-stone of which was laid in 1706. It was thirty-seven years in building, and is justly considered one of the strongest and most splendid buildings in America. A religious ceremony, accompanied with music and the usual amount of bare-headed padres, was going on in front of one of the churches, and far and near the sidewalks and door-steps of the dwellings were covered with kneeling figures, responding fervently to the monotonous chanting of the priests. Pablo reverently uncovered his head, and, dismounting, knelt a moment, and again straddling his mule, passed on, fully satisfied with his transient devotions. Following the universal custom, I raised my hat as I passed the holy group. Loud strains of church music filled the air, mingled with the voices of choristers and priests. As I gazed upon the scene, now rendered indistinct with the glimmering twilight, I could not avoid, heretic as I was, a thrill of devotional enthusiasm. Down three long thoroughfares, and forming a vast circle of worshipers around the Plaza, knelt the veiled señorita, the blear-eyed beldame, the rough soldier, and the tender child, each responding devoutly to the loud-chanted prayer, and solemnly making the sign of the holy cross. He must, indeed, be an impassive spectator who can witness unmoved the imposing rites of the Catholic Church, clothed though they be with the trickery and tinsel with which the priesthood love to catch the eye of the masses.

I was too weary with my uncomfortable ride to think of much else than reaching the house of Dr. Livingston, where, after traversing several silent, grass-grown streets, we arrived and were cordially welcomed. The doctor is so often referred



CALLE REAL, LEON.

to by American travelers that I felt a growing curiosity to know him. We had hardly reached the door ere he approached, and, to my surprise, saluted me by name. It appeared that a gentleman who left Chinandega a day before me had notified him of my arrival. To say that I was heartily and generously entertained during my stay in Leon would be far less than the tribute I could wish to pay my hospitable and manly host. A package of letters and the latest New York and California newspapers absorbed his attention for a while, his latest news from beyond Central America dating back three months. As I observed his intelligent face and quick, penetrating eye, I could but remark that his five years' residence in Nicaragua had produced none of those languid habits and enervation attributed to the foreigner living in the lowlands of Central America. Amid the many revolutions and consequent jealousies, he had hitherto escaped the ill feeling frequently manifested toward Americans, and I afterward found that he had more friends, and possessed a wider social and political influence, than any other of my countrymen in the republic. In a few minutes a bountiful supper was spread in the corridor, the doctor remarking that, though long custom had led him to adopt the hours and style of the

country, he was sure that a Californian could not yet have forgotten how to appreciate a more substantial repast. I now learned that the religious ceremony I had just witnessed was preparatory to the flight of souls into eternity expected to take place on the morrow, that day having been selected for the grand assault on Granada, to be made by the Castellon troops. The circumstance of its being the thirty-third anniversary of Central American independence was expected to impart extraordinary animation to the troops. As we conversed, the sound of exploding "bombas," with the loud clang of every church bell in the city, announced the conclusion of the formalities.

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## CHAPTER V.

Independent Day.—Leon.—Revolution of 1854.—A Texan's method of keeping his Men.—Leon and Granada a century and a half ago.—The Cathedral.—Churches.—A Visit to President Castellon.—Appearance of Government Officers.—Ex-President Ramierez.—"Chico Dias."—Society.—La Casa del Gobierno.—A Proposition.—Patriotism.—Saddles.—Rain in Nicaragua.—Departure from Leon.—A Morning Gallop.—Superb Scenery.—Chinandega.—Tiste.—Fruit.—More Assessments.—An Alarm.—Cacherula.—Nicaraguan Women.—Preparations for Departure.—Separation of the Party.—Departure.—El Viejo.—Shooting a Monkey.—Zempisque.—The "Horrors."—A Bongo del Golfo.—The Patron.—Embarkation.—Estero Real.—Scenery.—"Comfort."—La Playa Grande.—An Adventure.—Bay of Fonseca.

I WAS awakened on the following morning with repeated salvos of artillery, shaking the adobe house to its foundation. It was the anniversary of the separation of the states from the mother country. One feels a curiosity in these little republics to observe the method of celebrating their "Independent Day." Here, however, there was none of the enthusiasm and universal rejoicing exhibited in the United States. Instead of thoroughfares crowded with merry children, buildings decorated with flags, and the thousand active demonstrations heralding the arrival of "the Fourth," I saw but an occasional church procession winding its solemn way among kneeling gazers; and the only military display, a dozen or so of soldiers attending the train.

After breakfast we went to the grand Plaza, where a squad of noisy fellows in white uniforms were firing a cannon, which ever



and anon echoed among the narrow streets. We had quite forgotten our proximity to the gun, and, engaged in conversation, had strolled within a few yards of its mouth, when a coffee-colored rascal applied the match, enveloping our little party in smoke, and half stunning us with the noise. The doctor gave them a look, to which the crowd replied with a loud "*viva*."

Leon in 1854, like every other Nicaraguan city, presented a sorry spectacle. In fact, the town is falling to decay, and every species of improvement has long since ceased. With the frantic revolutions which have successively swept over the country, the finest residences of the old Spanish families have been burned or torn down, until now, though the first city of the republic, it is but the ghost of its former self. I passed through one street lined on either side with ruined arches and walls, the whole overgrown with massive verdure, and resembling the relics of some aboriginal race. In 1823 this part of the city, comprising nearly two thousand houses, was destroyed by fire. The gardens, formerly extending back from the streets, are now choked with weeds and ruins. I know of nothing sadder than the apparent certainty with which these people seem hurrying themselves out of political existence. Without tracing back the tangle of revolutions which, since the Declaration of Independence in 1821, have swept through the country, I shall briefly revert to the causes and leading incidents of the last.

In November, 1853, a general presidential election was held throughout Nicaragua, the candidates being Señores Fruto Chamorro, formerly Minister of War and belonging to the Granada faction, and Francisco Castellon, a *licenciado* of Leon, and successively minister to England and France. An ancient feud has existed between the rival cities, in which families, intermarried, have become estranged, and bitter jealousies have given rise to incessant wars. The election referred to resulted in favor of Chamorro, though, as the natives of Leon asserted, by fraud practiced at the ballot-box. At the union of the *Camaras*, Chamorro attempted obnoxious alterations in the Constitution, of such a type that the suspicions of the people were aroused. It is asserted that evidences of a conspiracy on the part of Castellon and his friends were discovered. This is vehemently denied by the Democrats. The times, however, were considered to demand



rigorous measures, so Castellon and a number of his most influential friends were banished the state. They proceeded to Honduras, where in a few months, with the assistance of President Cabañas, of that republic, a small invading army was raised, and in May of the same year General Jerez landed at Realejo, and proclaimed Castellon in that place and at Chinandega, where, as well as in Leon, the population declared in his favor.

Chamorro at once took the field, but was beaten in two battles and driven to his native Granada, pursued by the victorious Castellon troops, where he fortified himself in the Plaza, and retained possession of it, despite the vigorous assaults of his besiegers. The entire state, with the exception of Granada, was, at the time of my arrival in Leon, in the hands of the Democrats, and sanguine anticipations were entertained that Granada would be taken during the month of September. The issue involved in this contest, which lasted through the year 1854, was not so much a matter of success between the opposing leaders as the predominance of Liberal or Democratic principles in Nicaragua; Chamorro being one of the wealthiest *hacendados* in the state, and having for his supporters the aristocratic families and the priesthood. Castellon had always been regarded as the people's man, but in the event of success he would not have remained long in power, being weak and vacillating, though one of the ablest political men in the republic. Subsequent events since the arrival of Walker have given a turn to affairs little anticipated by either party in the early days of the Revolution. In this contest Honduras espoused the cause of the Liberals, President Cabañas ranking among the most illustrious leaders of that party. Costa Rica and San Salvador remained inactive spectators, the former covertly advocating the servile or conservative cause through its organ, "*La Gaceta*," while Guatemala, openly in favor of Chamorro, took no active part, except to employ its secret agents in the theatre of war. Later, however, General Guardiola, with a considerable body of Guatemalans, assumed the Chamorro cause, and became actively engaged in the contest. Such was the relative position of the Central American states in 1854.

During this revolution the trade of the republic was paralyzed. The few vessels entering Realejo and San Juan del Sur

hardly imparted the name of commerce, while the usual brisk traffic of Granada was carefully cut off by the Democratic fleets cruising in the lake. With such a condition of affairs, it is not surprising that a general stagnation was experienced throughout the state. Even the few agricultural efforts were discouraged by the inevitable descent made upon any half dozen laborers brought together upon the haciendas. The rich retired to their estates to avoid assessments, and the poorer classes were constantly in fear of impressment. No regard to property was shown. The muleteer, pursuing his avocation along the highway, overtaken by the troops of either party, was deprived of his animals, and taken himself to the nearest *cuartel* and forcibly enlisted. Only the property of foreigners was exempt from assessment. A few days before my arrival at Leon, a party had been sent to the hacienda of an American (a Texan) for the purpose of securing a body of natives collected there to grind cane. On learning the object of the visit, Sam gathered his dusky brood in an adobe house, and, taking his long rifle in hand, placed himself before the door. The officer in command arrived and demanded the men. Sam assured him that the first one who entered the yard would be shot. The officer expostulated; Sam remained firm, and with such a wicked look that the party finally returned, the captain informing Castellon that "these Americans were not to be trifled with," and that he felt sure Sam would have fired had he persisted.

"In that case," gravely replied the President, "you did right to retire. *Son hombres muy violentos estos Americanos!*"

About twenty Americans were employed in the two contending armies. Those in the Castellon cause were never allowed to assist in a charge or attack, their skill being held at too high an estimate as riflemen to be risked in the open field. The accuracy acquired by some of these auxiliaries became a matter of great wonder, and large bribes were offered on both sides to secure their services. There were also Italians and French employed as gunners and riflemen. The country beyond Granada and to the northward of Leon was infested with *guerrillas* and scouting-parties, keeping the inhabitants in a constant state of alarm. Nicaragua has rarely suffered under more pressing evils than at this time.

The foundation of the present city of Leon was laid some eighty years after the abandonment of the old capital founded by Francisco Hernandez de Cordova in 1523. The ruins of the old city, dating in antiquity with Granada, may yet be seen near Lake Managua. The work of Thomas Gage, an English friar writing in 1699,\* p. 419, says: "This city of Leon is very curiously built, for the chief Delight of the Inhabitants consists in their houses, and in the Pleasure of the country adjoining, and in the abundance of all things for the Life of Man, more than in the extraordinary Riches, which there are not so much enjoyed as in other parts of America. They are content with fine Gardens, with variety of singing Birds and Parrets, with plenty of Fish and Flesh, which is cheap, and with gay Horses, and so lead a delicious, lasie, and idle Life; not aspiring much Trade and Traffique, tho they have near them the Lake, which commonly every year sends forth some Frigates to the Havana by the North Sea, and Realejo on the South Sea, which might be very commodious for any dealing and rich trading in Peru or to Mexico, if their Spirits would carry them so far: the Gentlemen of this City are almost as vain and phantastical as are those of Chiapa: especially from the Pleasure of this City is all that Province of Nicaragua called by the Spaniards 'Mahomet's Paradise.'" Speaking of the opulence and trade of Granada, the same author says, p. 421: "That year I was there, before I betook myself to an Indian Town, in one day there entered six Riquas (which were at least three hundred mules) from St. Salvador and Comayagua only, laden with nothing but Indigo, Cochinil and Hides; and two days after, from Guatemala, came in three more, one laden with silver (which was the king's tribute from that country), the other with Sugar, and the other with Indigo."

Leon now contains about 15,000 inhabitants, among whom are many of the most illustrious families in Central America. The city extends over a large space, but in architecture does not materially differ from Chinandega. There are several public buildings with some pretensions to elegance. Its churches

\* *A New Survey of the West Indies; "being a Journey of Three Thousand and Three Hundred Miles within the main-land of America. By Thomas Gage, the only Protestant that was ever known to have travel'd those parts."*



CATHEDRAL OF LEON.

are more numerous and larger than those of any other Central American city excepting Guatemala, among them the Cathedral of San Pedro, already referred to. Its roof has served as a fortress in times of siege, and no better evidence is wanting of the fearful struggles which have taken place around it than the thousands of bullet-marks scarring its venerable walls. They are of immense thickness, and no earthquake has yet been able to create the slightest fissure in them. One of its towers was struck by lightning some years since, and the upper portion destroyed. The interior has all the impressive grandeur of the European cathedrals. It was formerly enormously rich in ornaments, but these have long since disappeared. Numerous tawdry, tinseled figures of the Virgin and some of the saints stand now in the grand old niches, with here and there an execrable daub of a painting, as if in mockery of its ancient splendor. High aloft in a small stone gallery was placed a broken-winded organ; its wheezing and discordant strains filled the building with inharmonious echoes. The pavement was covered here and there with motionless figures, kneeling with faces toward the great altar, near which two priests were reading some ceremony. The great bells of the church, pealing forth at intervals their heavy notes, sounded with dead and muffled tone between these ponderous walls. The church of La Merced is another imposing structure, but by no means comparing to San Pedro. Here we found some fifty worshipers, whose low-muttered prayers sounded like the hum of thousands of buzzing insects among the arches. The churches of Calvario,



San Juan de Dios, San Francisco, and Guadalupe are, among some others, worthy of notice. At Subtiaba, an Indian village near the city, there is also a well-built church, and these comprise all in or around the city likely to attract attention.

My letters of introduction included several to Castellon, the Provisional Director of the state. On the morning after my arrival I called upon him. The *Casa del Gobierno* was situated in a narrow street leading from the Plaza de la Merced. A guard presented arms as I entered, and a well-dressed *attaché* of the place, in reply to my inquiry, said the President was breakfasting, and invited me to a seat near the corridor. The room was dark and cool, stone paved, without ornaments, and perfectly silent. In ten minutes a door at the opposite end of the room opened, and I was requested to enter an adjoining apartment, where having seated myself, in another moment the President came in. I introduced myself, and presented my letters, at which he glanced for a moment, and then taking out his *tabaquero*, offered me a cigar. Castellon appeared a little under forty years of age. In stature he was short, inclined to corpulency, with a fine, open, expressive face, the pleasing qualities of which were much enhanced by a constant smile, almost feminine in its sweetness. For a wonder, he had light, straight hair, a fair complexion, and blue eyes. He was dressed in snow-white pants, a blue coat with metal buttons, and wore a profusion of jewelry. After half an hour's interview, I thought him the most polished gentleman I had met in the country. As an orator, he was not excelled in the state; and as a diplomatist, his powers have been brought into prominent notice in his advocacy of the rights of Nicaragua against the pretensions of England while minister to that country. He kindly offered me letters of introduction to President Cabañas, of Honduras, and to other distinguished families in that republic. The *des-pacho* in which we were seated was the head-quarters of the actual government. It contained two tables, with red damask covers, several chairs, and, as usual, a hammock. These comprised the furniture of the apartment.

As I left the room, the President assured me of his particular favor, and hinted that I might be of service to him before leaving the state. Of course, I placed myself "at his disposition."

In the *sala* I met Señor Jesus Barca, newly appointed *Ministro de Relaciones*, to whom I delivered my dispatches and letters. He was a short, active little gentleman, with skin dried to parchment, and the blackest and most piercing eyes I had yet encountered among this dark-eyed race. He promised me a special passport, which he said would serve me day or night any where in the republic. While conversing we were joined by another government official, Señor Pablo Caravajal, Minister of War and Finance. He was as profuse in compliments as my other newly-made friends, and placed himself and "poor house" at my disposal.

This last is a matter of custom in all Spanish America. An expression of admiration bestowed upon a horse, saddle, house, or article of jewelry, generally elicits the reply, "*Es de Vd., señor,*" or, "It is at your service, sir."

Foreigners sometimes construe this pretty little practice literally, very much to the chagrin of the punctilious Don.

Most of the members of the new government to whom I was introduced looked haggard and overworked. They, at least, were not amenable to the charge of laziness commonly laid at the door of the Central American. This careworn expression struck me as the characteristic feature of public men in the country. The amount of labor and correspondence, added to the debilitating effect of the climate, seems to tell upon natives as well as foreigners.

Before leaving California, I had received from a friend a kind letter of introduction to Don Jorje Viteri, Bishop of Leon. On my arrival, I learned he had been dead several months, and, being desirous of making my peace with the head of the Church, I determined to call upon his successor.

A fat little girl, barefooted, and half-frightened at the appearance of a stranger, ushered me into the *sala* of the padre. After a few minutes' delay she returned, and said the padre was asleep, but advised me to leave my letter and call later. On my return, two hours afterward, she handed it to me unopened, saying that her master never opened notes addressed to dead men, and wondered I had not ascertained in *el Norte* the death of the bishop. I found I had offended by my ignorance of ecclesiastical forms, and departed a wiser man, but without seeing

the head of the Church. A day or two afterward I met the old gentleman waddling home from mass, and, much to my surprise, he advanced and addressed me, proffering a *cigarro* by way of breaking the ice. I found him an agreeable, well-educated man, and by no means the bigoted churchman I had expected. My fault consisted in not knowing that the defunct dignitary had been succeeded by so distinguished a personage.

While in Leon I received several invitations from families, and met some of the most *distingué* of the city. There seems but little difference between the manner of living here and in Mexico. At the house of Señor Nolberto Ramierez, former president of the state, I found that gentleman living in retirement from the cares of public life. He made particular inquiries regarding the political affairs of California, and showed a degree of interest in the progress of the new state, and a minuteness of information I was unprepared to meet. He predicted the eventual separation of California from the Union, and was so positive on the subject that I waived the argument. He was extremely cautious in conversing upon the affairs of Nicaragua. He has the reputation of having devoted a lifetime to the arrangement of the political turmoils of the state, and has never been suspected of harboring other than the most liberal and patriotic views toward the country. He was tall and commanding in stature, with strongly-marked features, a serious, thoughtful cast of countenance, and with a natural elegance of address which is wanting in very few of the leading men of Central America. The administration of Ramierez is said to have been the most politic and peaceful since the independence. Had the Castellon cause succeeded, he would doubtless have resumed the presidency on the re-establishment of peace.

Among the most cordial of the friends I made in Leon was Don Francisco Diaz Zapato, whose open frankness of character never fails to win the heart at the first interview. To his kindness I was indebted for a paragraph in the *Nueva Era*, the democratic organ of the state, setting forth the objects of my visit, and which I afterward found had already reached the interior of Honduras before my arrival there. At his residence I was introduced to several young ladies, whose accomplishments and graces took me back to the scenes of my native land. One of



THE BRIDGE OF LEON.

them performed a number of waltzes and operatic airs on the piano with a brilliancy and taste hardly to be expected in Nicaragua, where the means of musical instruction are so meagre.

The principal topics in society seemed to be the probable result of the siege of Granada and the revolution in general. In these conversations the ladies usually joined. There seemed a universal fear among them that some of the frightful scenes of the old war might at any time be renewed—a fear not entirely groundless in the event of a change in the tide of affairs against the Castellon cause. So prevalent was this idea, that Dr. Livingston's house was made the receptacle of trunks of valuables, stored there with the impression that under the American flag they would be safe. While sitting in Señor Zapato's house, the news arrived that one of the principal churches in Granada had lost its tower in the bombardment.

Returning one day to the house, I found a note addressed to me containing an invitation from Castellon to call at the *Casa del Gobierno* on important business. Arrived there, I found a licenciado of San Salvador, who was introduced as a leading member of the Liberal party. A number of civil and military persons were seated at a table, on which were spread books, pens, and paper, while one was endeavoring to explain to the others some knotty question in the science of gunnery. They desired of me an estimate of the cost, in California, of two



mortars, two hundred bombs, and the necessary accoutrements. Though not perfectly "posted" in such matters, I made the calculation, and, in the course of conversation, was surprised to learn that not one in the army was acquainted with the method of firing a mortar, or with the slightest matters pertaining to their use, and I now saw why the services of foreigners were held in such repute. Before I left the room a liberal offer was made me to abandon my enterprise and join the Democratic army. I had, however, long since determined to eschew any part in the dissensions of the country, at least until I arrived at Tegucigalpa.

My stay in Leon was sufficiently long to enable me to see its "lions," and to obtain a pretty correct estimate of the characteristics of its inhabitants. I found them imbued with that formality and politeness always marking the Spaniard, sociable, obliging, and, though alive to the unhappy condition of their country, extremely sensitive as to the opinion expressed by foreigners. A dozen times I was asked how I liked Nicaragua, and as I had landed in Central America determined to preserve my temper and find no fault among the people, I often gratified my audience with a scrap of praise, which seemed not the less acceptable for being not wholly deserved. To judge from the articles appearing in the newspaper of the country, and the numerous political pamphlets and hand-bills published and left at the doors, there seemed no lack of patriotism. From the president to the merest vagabond, every inhabitant may express his ideas upon the state of the country, and every body that can do so reads all that is published. The press is not without its effect in Central America.

At the house of an acquaintance I observed the iron gratings wrenched off from the street windows. This I learned had been done by the Democratic army, who had cut these bars into slugs, which, being sent to the Jalteva, were fired into Granada. Ammunition, however, was now failing, and among other propositions made to me was a return to California to purchase some tons of gunpowder for the government. Had I been disposed to become the commissioner, my remuneration would probably have consisted of thanks, judging from the case of Captain Morton, an American commanding a schooner in the public service, who had

been waiting in vain several months for his pay; and also of several other foreigners who, venturing to risk their property and services, had been wearied and disgusted with the uniform reply, "*Vienes mañana.*"

By the advice of my friend the doctor, I determined to purchase in Leon the necessary articles for my mountain traveling through Honduras. In California, a friend who had passed through Nicaragua in 1851 had discouraged me from taking my excellent Mexican saddle, assuring me that all the horse paraphernalia could be obtained in Nicaragua without trouble. I had hardly arrived at San Juan del Sur when I discovered the fallacy of such an idea, and I had to regret for eight months afterward not having provided myself with this necessary article. Saddles in the interior of Central America are not to be obtained. An apology for the article, the *albardo*, may be bought for from six to eight dollars, but in shape, material, and comfort entirely unlike the famous Mexican saddle, while for mountain traveling it is even less convenient than the English or American patterns. Every gentleman throughout the country owns his saddle, which it is considered almost impolite to attempt to borrow, while few are found exposed for sale in the shops. In Nicaragua, the same license (to call it by a no severer word) which seized upon mules and horses wherever they were found, appropriated also the saddles and *albardos*; consequently, it was with the greatest difficulty one could be obtained. A whole day was spent in hunting up, with the help of a couple of the doctor's servants, the common gear of a horse. Feed was equally scarce, and it being dangerous to put horses to pasture, it was necessary to fodder them at home, for which small bundles of *sacate*, at a *medio* a bunch, were purchased. I enter into these details that the future traveler may know what to expect in Nicaragua.

On the day previous to my departure, one of the heaviest rain-storms I ever experienced passed over Leon. The houses across the street were but faintly seen through the falling water, and the thoroughfares were running streams. This was pronounced the severest of the year. The quantity of rain descending in a season is very great. At the hacienda of Polvon, owned by Dr. Livingston, where he kept a rain gauge, there fell, in 1853, from September 9th to November 19th, eighty inches of

water. Eighteen inches fell in one day. In Chinandega rain is said to have fallen three feet in seven days, and the doctor calculated that one hundred and fifty inches often falls in one rainy season of six months. In the mountainous parts of the country, the suddenness of the rains sometimes swells the river to such an extent as to detain the government couriers many hours. With the cessation of the storm the streams usually decrease.

On the same evening Señor Barca called with a special passport. The señor had hardly taken his leave when the boy Chico entered, with a blank face, quietly remarking that, while he was leading the horses to water, they had been pounced upon, and he had only escaped impressment by dodging between the animals and making the best of his way to the house. I was already giving up the beasts for lost, when the doctor, hearing the story, took Chico out with him, and, after long and severe expostulation with the commanding officer, succeeded in regaining the property.

On the following morning, before daylight, I was awakened by a pulling at my sleeve, and, opening my eyes, saw Pablo beside the hammock with a lighted candle and a cup of delicious coffee. In a few minutes the whole house was astir; the mules were saddled, our "good-by's" said, and, accompanied by the doctor and another resident of Leon, we issued into the silent street just as a streak of light betokened dawn. The only sounds as we passed slowly out of the city were the distant note of the deep-toned bell, and the faint cry of "Alerto!" of the watchful sentinel. The air was soft and delicious. The hum of thousands of insects, rising among the dark woods through which we passed, created a drowsy music in accordance with the stillness of the hour. As the eastern horizon became tinted with the coming dawn, a scene was gradually revealed such as I had never before witnessed.

We were gradually ascending a rise in the road which overlooked a vast expanse of plain, covered with innumerable varieties of trees, presenting as yet, in the faint morning light, but an indistinct mass of verdure. Looking westward, with our backs to the crimson horizon, we counted five lofty volcanoes rising in majestic beauty, their tops thinly mantled with gray



THE GREAT PLAIN OF LEON.

clouds. Their conical forms, perfectly defined, appeared of an intense blue, which, either from the scintillating glow of the eastern sky, or the roseate tints among the wet foliage covering their sides, seemed to sparkle and blink in the morning light like great slopes of blue velvet interwoven with brilliants. This opalescent effect lasted but a few minutes, when, as the sun began to illumine the landscape below, the flickering azure of the mountains gave place to a rich green, and every peak stood out in sharp relief against the sky. The eye could never weary of the surpassing loveliness of such a scene. The entire landscape possessed a luxurious softness and delicacy of outline, a rounded, undulating beauty, such as no description can paint. Insensibly we paused and gazed, as upon the transitions of a dissolving view. Morning, casting aside her dewy mantle, and mingling with the “sapphire blaze” of day!

Rare birds flitted along the road, and flocks of the *lora real*, or yellow-crested parrot, surprised by the sudden appearance of our little cavalcade, fluttered noisily from amid the overhanging trees, or peeped at us slyly from out the rank leaves, with whose emerald hues their own bright plumage blended and vied. The first four hours' ride was the most delicious of my life. I could not help being charmed. Even my companions, used as they were to the scene, admitted they had seldom breathed a purer air or traveled in a more delightful morning. At eight o'clock we reached Posulteга, where we breakfasted at the house of



Señora Ramierez, and again crossing the little river of Quesalhuague, we passed Chichigalpa at a round gallop, and re-entered Chinandega, having met but four persons on the road. My companions proceeded to the house of a friend, while Pablo and myself dismounted at the door of Señor Montealegre's hospitable mansion, where, as before, the whole household turned out to receive me.

On entering the house, I was about taking off my hat to enjoy the welcome coolness of the veranda, when the ladies uttered a general cry, insisting that an attack of *calentura* would certainly succeed so great an imprudence, as also from my attempting to use cold water on my hands while heated with riding. A calabash of delicious *tiste*, cool from the earthen jar in which it is kept, and a stretch at full length in the hammock, served to make me thoroughly comfortable. This beverage is drunk throughout Nicaragua, and in some portions of Honduras. It is made to order in a long calabash taken from a tree (the name of which I have lost) growing in clusters in all parts of the state. A quantity of cacao, sugar, and pounded parched corn are mixed carefully together, and the rustic goblet filled to the brim with cool water. A curiously-carved muddler is then used to stir them up, and the calabash, placed in the folds of a napkin to maintain an upright position, is handed to the thirsty recipient, the sides of the cup distilling little globules of coolness. I never failed, when traveling, to procure a cup of *tiste* when it was to be had. Its delicate flavor and refreshing qualities are admitted by all who have tasted it.

The oranges of Chinandega are celebrated in all Central America. They have a peculiar sweetness not possessed by any others. The white pine-apples of this vicinity are also famous; they are descended from the Guayaquil pines, which were introduced into Nicaragua some years since, and are far superior to those of the country. The fruits are those found in most intertropical latitudes, and are universally known; but for delicious flavor, and the quality which does not bring disgust with satiety, commend me to the Chinandega orange (the blood), the níspero, the guineo, guava, and zapote. The good señora, having learned my taste, took care that a bountiful supply of these luscious fruits should be always within my reach. In-

deed, it seemed that nothing conducive to my comfort was omitted by my kind entertainers. If I wished to ride, I had but to take my choice from among several valuable *andadoras*. A step out into the fierce rays of the noonday sun, and Pablo was sure to follow me with an umbrella, and a hint from *la señora* that the cool of the evening was healthier for a promenade. The same careful attendant, by order of Don Mariano, came after me to the bath with relays of towels and other comforts. During my absence at Leon another demand for \$5000 had been made on Señor Montealegre. I found him in great trouble, and entertaining serious thoughts of leaving the country with what remained of his worldly goods. Even the stanch adherence he had ever shown to the Democratic cause was daily lessening under the infamous robberies practiced upon him. Other families were sufferers to a nearly equal extent. With the name and form of a republic, there is actually as little security for life and property in Nicaragua as in despotic Russia itself.

Lounging in my hammock on a still, drowsy afternoon, I was aroused by an unusual commotion, and cries of *el enemigo* ! followed by the clapping to of doors and windows along the street, and the hurrying to and fro of women. In a few minutes the house was darkened and firmly barricaded. Our little party proceeded into the street, where we were presently surrounded by a crowd of acquaintances, some advocating a hasty retreat out of the town, and others running distractedly about, with apparently no settled object in view. The alarm came from two frightened horsemen, who rode into town with the news that Cacherula, a famous *guerrilla* chieftain attached to the Chamorro cause, was about attacking the place with three hundred men. In ten minutes every house and *tienda* was shut. Women stood at the half-opened doors, and signaled to each other by clapping the hands. The streets were deserted save by a few mounted citizens strongly compromised on the Castellon side, and ready to fly at the first confirmation of the report. The respective flags were raised above each consular residence, and from the Plaza came the rapid beat of the little drum, calling the garrison to arms. Relying on our foreign appearance and non-committal position to protect us, but buckling on a formidable array of Colt's persuaders, we walked around to where Dr.

Livingston and a few foreign friends had raised the American flag. A similar protection, my own private property, was already floating over the door of my host, who, with the females of the house, regarded its flaunting folds as an ægis of safety. My friends laughed at our armament, and said this was alarm No. 20 since the commencement of the revolution. While we were talking, a squad of troopers, apparently full of fight, dashed past, headed by a determined-looking officer, who sat his horse like a statue. Every body expected an action; but, after an hour's suspense, they returned, and the flags were pulled down, the houses and *tiendas* reopened, and the streets toward evening became again filled with groups of knowing politicians, commenting on the events of the day. As on former occasions, a large amount of valuables had been carried with all speed to the houses of the American and English consuls, but were returned the same night. Life in Nicaragua in revolutionary times is at best a succession of alarms.

Visits in Chinandega are usually made after sunset, when the daily household cares are supposed to be over. At this time the señorita issues from the house, with her raven hair simply plaited and tastefully put up behind the head (the Spanish women are usually faultless in their manner of arranging the hair). A light and often gaudy shawl is thrown becomingly over the shoulders, and drawn tightly in around the waist. Not to have small hands and feet, even among the working people, is an exception to the rule, and it is rare to see an awkward gait among the Central American women. Every one who has passed through the country can not fail to have remarked their upright forms, and easy, graceful step. With the lower classes this is caused by the never-ending task of bearing water-jars upon the head, an erect posture enabling them the better to balance the load. An elasticity is also acquired by stepping over the large pavements of the streets, requiring the pedestrian to exert the muscles of the toes and calf.

On entering each other's houses, the ladies usually go through a very pretty little pantomime, something like an embrace, but ending by patting each other gently over the shoulders. This done, the visitors seat themselves around the room, and the conversation commences at once and without restraint. The *cigar-*

no is generally smoked by all as a sort of incentive to sociability. There is, however, a tendency to formality, and a stiff, upright manner of sitting around the room, and one misses the *style* of the really accomplished and elegant lady. Among the women there is true sincerity. You are seldom deceived by them, and infidelity is rarer than the habitual defamers of Central American women would lead one to believe. On one occasion, at a reunion in the *sala* of Señor Montealegre, I was introduced to Don Francisco Morazan, a natural son of the general. He bore some traces of the remarkable man from whom he was descended, but in character was as different as night from day. General Morazan left still another son, a General Ruis, residing in Tegucigalpa. He resembles the portraits I have seen of the father, but there the likeness ceases. It rarely happens that the stronger traits of great men are transmitted to their descendants.

While awaiting the arrival of a package of introductory letters, we scoured the country around for many miles in the vicinity of Chinandega, visiting several haciendas and small towns, and once actually starting with a guide to make the ascent of El Viejo, which some of our resident friends asserted had never been accomplished. Circumstances, however, obliged us to defer the project. The arrival of the expected letters at last enabled us to proceed with our original expedition, and after two days of consultation an arrangement was finally effected with my two companions, and it was decided that I should proceed alone into Honduras, the observations and contracts to be made there requiring the services of one person only. I did not part from my friends without the deepest regret. We had left California together, and hitherto shared alike the pleasures and inconveniences of the country. To the attractions of agreeable company they added the warm friendship cemented by long acquaintance in the early days of Californian life. Still there was to me an enchantment in venturing alone upon the secluded and unexplored region I was about to visit. Fortified with flattering letters to the principal citizens of Honduras, well provided with doubloons, and confident that the enterprise, if successful, would possibly open a rich mineral district to American enterprise, I looked forward with pleasure and impatience to the continuance of my travels.



The Montealegres took upon themselves the management of my outfit. To the last hour of my stay with this truly benevolent family they showed a solicitude in my welfare I could scarcely have looked for away from home. A hundred little articles were obtained for me, the necessity of which I could never have known. Early next morning, accompanied by the sons of Don Carlos Dardano, who were now returning from a four years' absence to their home at Tigre Island, I left the house where I had experienced so many hospitalities, and, followed by a little tempest of good wishes from the family, turned the heads of our horses toward the *embarcadero* of Zempisque, situated at the head of a small tide-water creek connecting with the Estero Real. A ride of four miles brought us to the ancient town of Viejo, the head-quarters of the bongo-men, and where, the night previous, my attentive host in Chinandega had dispatched a boy to engage a bongo for the trip to Tigre Island. The town, which is one of the oldest in the state, contains some three thousand inhabitants. Its private dwellings are constructed better than those of any other place of equal size in Nicaragua, and it is the residence of many old and wealthy families. Don Mariano asserts that the richest men in Central America reside there. The church of La Concepcion is the principal building, and there is a smaller one—Calvario.

The road between Chinandega and this town is bordered with the usual rank growth of cactus hedge, separating it from corn and bean plantations, all smiling in the early sunlight, and green as a New England meadow in June. From here to Zempisque, a distance of fourteen miles, we saw but one house; the road quickly dwindling into a mere mule-path, leading through a thick forest, some of the trees six feet in diameter. The woods appeared to have been recently burned over, many of the smaller growth standing leafless and dead. The larger ones formed a dense shade overhead, among which several large red monkeys were swinging, some by their tails, and grimacing horribly at us as we passed. I could not resist the temptation of examining one, and at the crack of my rifle a wounded fellow came tumbling down through the branches, the woods resounding with the cries of his companions. One of his legs was broken, and, apart from his almost human moans and real tears, his ap-

peeling glances, as if reproaching me for my cruelty, made me resolve never again to enact this needless tragedy. His trembling accents, and the serio-comic manner with which he put his fingers into the bloody wound, and piteously held them up for me to gaze at, haunted me the rest of the day. Pablo, who had come with us to lead back the horses, put an end to his sufferings. I lacked the heart to finish my own work. The entire northern coast of Nicaragua bordering upon the Bay of Fonseca is a wild waste of country, wooded to a certain extent, as I have described above, and, with the exception of the marshes through which the lesser *esteros* make their way, capable of producing, with cultivation, enough to supply all Central America with food. But, with the exception of the great cape forming the southern "Pillar of Hercules" of the Bay of Fonseca, and upon which the great volcano of Consiguina is situated, this portion of the state is sparsely inhabited and produces nothing. In the region above excepted there are several large cattle estates, and some successful attempts at cultivation have been made. Before noon we arrived at a solitary hut of poles and straw, standing

about twenty feet above a slough of despond, in the rank, slimy black mud of which, it being low tide, several bongos lay keeled over and blistering in the sun. We had arrived at Zempisque. A negro, shivering with the fever and ague, put his head out from beneath a tattered blanket at the door of the hut, and faintly ejaculated "*Adios, Caballeros!*" His filmy, blood-shot eyes and attenuated features were almost ghastly in their hideous-



EL PUERTO DE ZEMPISQUE.

ness. To our inquiries, he replied that we had yet to wait four hours for the return of tide.

I can not now recall a picture of more squalid wretchedness

than was here presented. The dense mangrove-trees, in which the croaking *zopilote* sat brooding like the evil genius of the place over the miry waste below, seemed like huge skeletons, outstretching like arms their gaunt, leafless branches, the gnarled roots beneath a representation of writhing snakes. This idea was assisted by an incessant indescribable noise, caused by the movements of myriads of crabs scrabbling in the reeky slime. What with having but just severed the last chain that associated with home, the dying moans of the monkey which *would* haunt me, and the desolation of this frightful place, I now experienced my first twinge of genuine disgust. To add to the discomforts, the elder Mr. Dardano was taken down with fever, and we had scarcely got him stretched out in the filthy hut when the *chubasco* came on, with its forked lightnings and rattling thunder. The dismal solitude of the locality, the downpour of rain, the complaints of the sick, and the reflection that my papers and traveling paraphernalia, which had not yet arrived in the careton, would be ready soaked to hand, combined to make Zempisque a centre-point for future horrors and never-failing maledictions.

The rain at last ceased, and in its stead arose, as if by magic, clouds of musquitoes, gnats, and infinitesimal sand-flies, in such quantities that recollections of the Rio Grande, Mississippi, or Sacramento pale in comparison. The screeching cart at last arrived, and with it half a dozen sailors from Viejo, who deliberately pulled off their shirts and pants, and, wading naked into the mud, scrambled on board the largest bongo and began bailing her out. By the time this was accomplished, a small puddle of water forming in the lowest part of the mud announced the approach of the flood tide. As the water increased, the bongo, which was an immense "dug-out" of *guanacaste*, was got afloat, and our baggage put into her. I inquired the name of the *patron*, and a sullen, pig-eyed little mulatto presented himself with an air of vast importance, remarking that he was no "lake sailor," as he contemptuously denominated the navigators of Lake Nicaragua, but a true pilot and mariner. I presume he had received a portion of his pay in Chinandega, as he had two bottles of aguardiente, which he carefully stowed away in the stern sheets. He called himself Antonio, time out of mind the name of Spanish sailors. At heart he was a kind,

faithful fellow, and seemed to exercise some control over the rest. About two hours before sunset, the "Almirante" was hauled to the bank, and all hands embarked. She was at least thirty feet long, and about four deep. Over the stern had been placed some wooden hoops, bent into a semicircular form, serving for the framework to a sort of awning, which, as "Toney" remarked, with an air of no little pride, he had constructed with a special view to the comfort of passengers. This was the cabin. On the bottom of the boat, a flooring of rough planks was placed on sticks laid athwart-ships, to protect the saloon passengers from the water breaking over the sides, or falling into the boat in the way of rain. Altogether, our vessel was a triumph of Central American ship-building, and as we shoved out of the little *embarcadero* under the trees, that bent quite down to the gunwales, all hands gave an exultant whoop. Once under way, my boy Rafael (an Olanchano, who was desirous of getting home under my wing, and offered his services for the privilege of accompanying me) dragged out a pair of *alforjas*, into which the bounteous hand of the Señora Montealegre had crammed all manner of edibles. A repast was spread on the bottom of the bongo, and all seemed complete but coffee. I looked at Rafael, and said inquiringly,

"Café?"

"There is enough of it," replied he, "but it can't be cooked on board."

"Why not?"

"There is no kitchen!" In vain did I endeavor to explain to him that a fire might be lighted on the ballast, and at last compromised the matter by making it myself, heating the water in an old tin vessel used as a bailer. The crew looked on in wonder.

"Eight years have I been a bongo-man," said Antonio, "and it is only now we have learned from *Don Guillermo* how to obtain a great luxury."

They resolved to store up the lesson, and, I doubt not, have made coffee on the ballast of the "Almirante" ever since, if, indeed, she is not capsized and lost long since.

Equally ignorant were Antonio and his salt-water companions of the rise and fall of the tide in the estero. Of what use would



it be to him to cram his mind with such dull statistics? So, in eight years, he had never taken the trouble to look. By the water-marks on the trees I judged it to be eight feet. We followed the creek for about five miles, preserving for that distance a width of about forty feet, and, as Antonio assured me, of sufficient depth to float a large vessel, though I imagine that my *patron's* idea of size in naval architecture was limited to the different grades of bongos. The water, however, looked deep and still, and I failed to reach bottom with a sixteen-foot oar. The story goes that, about ten years since, a bright idea struck one of the Chinandega merchants, that, by opening this passage into the Estero Real sufficiently to admit large vessels, an easy communication could be had with the Bay of Fonseca, and the trading facilities of Northern Nicaragua be much improved. The work would result in vast benefit to all concerned. The labor would be trifling, and the expenses next to nothing. He pondered over the subject a year, and then imparted it in dreadful secrecy to a few neighbors, through whom it gradually got noised abroad. A meeting was held, and a committee appointed to examine the facilities of the place, who, after six months of patient deliberation, reported favorably. The priests decided that it would be a good thing, and since that time a meeting has been annually held to ascertain the most auspicious moment to commence operations. Without the establishment of a new order of affairs, the great-grandchildren of the committee will continue to deliberate on this project during the next century.

A dense thicket of mangle-trees borders the creek, through which a schooner of fifty tons could not pass without housing her masts. These trees are draped with long ear-drops, or pendants, hanging gracefully among the foliage. Two hours' pulling brought us, just at sunset, into the waters of the great estero, which here runs north and south. We shot out of the tortuous little river through whose mazes we had been winding into a fine body of water, apparently two hundred yards wide, and of sufficient depth to admit the passage of vessels of large tonnage. To the southward the estero lost itself, without any diminution of width, among a solid thicket of green foliage, over the tops of which the blue heights of El Viejo, though many leagues distant, loomed up against the evening sky. As the

sun went down, a swarm of mosquitoes came out of the jungle and bid defiance to sleep. Mr. Dardano's fever became alarmingly violent, and, as a last resort, I administered pills and powders given me by my friend, Dr. S., an hour before my departure from Chinandega. That done, I placed him in the bottom of the bongo, and, lighting a cigar, stretched myself out on a species of thwart, and between the paroxysms of the mosquitoes tried to enjoy the quiet beauty of the scene. The lux-



VIEW ON THE ESTERO REAL.

uriant vegetation hung in shadowy festoons along both banks of the estero, spreading in heavy green drapery upon the trees, an impervious wall of foliage, the lower leaves kissing the water's brim, and the upper dropping in graceful curling vines a hundred feet above. At times, as we glided noiselessly down with the tide, little vistas opened, revealing leafy bowers, now fast darkening with the approaching night. Parasitical plants, tasseled with gorgeous flowers, loaded the branches, which, as we slowly rounded the gradual bends, assumed fanciful shapes,

now resembling the massive arches of some old, battlemented castle, and anon changing into grotesque caverns and grottoes.

Night came slowly on, ushered in with the distant premonitions of an approaching squall. Antonio hauled the covering closer over the cabin, and prepared for the deluge of rain, fortifying himself meanwhile with a long pull at the aguardiente bottle, an auxiliary which he kept carefully wrapped up in his discarded shirt under one of the rough boards in the bottom of the bongo. One after another, the brilliant constellations wheeling overhead were obscured by the black-rimmed clouds rolling up from the horizon, until, in the deepening gloom, our bongo seemed to lie in the midst of an inland lake from which there appeared no outlet. A gust of wind preceded a terrific thunder-clap and blinding lightning, when the drama opened with the fall of sheets of water, making the estero an expanse of hissing bubbles. The crew pulled in their oars and crouched shivering under the *chosa*, the fierce wind driving the rain between the interstices of its wretched roof as through muslin. We were quickly saturated, and the sick man, covering himself with a sorry cloak, moaned piteously in the darkness. As for the baggage, I had long since resigned all hope of saving it from the wet, and trusted to a stout covering of canvas, which I had taken the precaution to have fitted to my trunks. No person intending to travel in Central America should neglect this, as it may prove for many days the only protection to his clothes and papers. As the tide was yet ebbing, we continued to drift down, passing the esteros of Nascagola and Palo Blanco, until, at nine o'clock, we were opposite a small, dismal military station, known as the Playa Grande, the most northerly outpost of Nicaragua. Antonio hoped we might slip by in the darkness, and escape the trouble of being interrogated, and perhaps searched. How they managed to descry us, except by the flashes of lightning, I could not imagine; but when opposite the landing, a loud voice hailed, ordering us to anchor, no boat being allowed to pass in the night. Antonio shouted in answer that "an American commissioner, with dispatches from Castellon for the Honduras government," was on board. Though sopping wet and shaking with cold, I could not help laughing aloud at his readiness; but the fib was of no avail; in a moment after, the order came to anchor.



There was no help for it, so the *patron* threw overboard his iron apology for an anchor, and in obedience to the voice, whose owner we had not yet seen, I scrambled into a boat which Antonio pulled toward us from the end of the landing, taking with me a small flask of excellent brandy, which I hoped might be useful in dispensing with some vexatious delays. The rain still poured with a spite and violence truly tropical. A wretched wharf, constructed of cane-poles, extended from the bank, and, feeling my way in the darkness, I had just gained a footing on the slippery poles, and was reaching forward to take the hand of a guard, who, with musket glistening with rain and an ancient lantern, had crawled down to assist me, when my foot slipped and in an instant I was ten feet under water. This was the only attempt I made at sounding the Estero Real, and I am confident I did not get bottom. A dull gurgling of waters, and a choking sense of darkness and cold, is all I remember, until I found myself clasping the end of a slippery pole extended by the soldier, the scene attended with the loud chattering of the bongo-man and the splashing of the still pouring rain. A short struggle, and I was once more on the wharf, soaked to the skin, and audibly cursing all Nicaraguan officials. The soldier ejaculated a laconic *Caramba!* and led the way about twenty yards to a small adobe cabin, with a fire flickering on the ground, and surrounded by puddles of water. A hide stretched across the "weather" side served for a door to this miserable abode, where were squatted half a dozen nearly naked creatures, ghastly with *calentura*, and huddling around the blaze which shone into their squalid faces, giving them the appearance of spectres. They answered my salutation with a universal "*Adios, señor!*" while from an adjoining room appeared a dirty, sleepy-looking officer, who announced himself as the *commandante*. He first examined my passport from the minister, now well soaked, and then, taking the lantern, deliberately surveyed me from boots to face, uttering a satisfied grunt in conclusion.

Under other circumstances I should have kept my cognac concealed, but needing it myself in my wet condition, I passed it, after paying my own respects to it, to the *commandante*, who, placing it to his mouth, drank nearly half at a gulp, returning it with a sigh of pleasure and regret. He presented me



a paper cigar, and ordered the soldier to escort me back to the boat. I asked him his name, which he gave with a gratified smile, but, having no place to write it down, it escaped me. It was needless to shift my clothes during the continuance of the rain, so, wrapping my *poncho* around me, I crept under the cabin, while the natives silently pulled up the anchor, and the bongo continued to drift toward the gulf.

At 11 o'clock the tide turned, and we again anchored. The crew crawled into the cabin, took a pull at the aguardiente bottle, and in five minutes all but the sick man and myself were sleeping soundly, despite the pattering of rain on the roof, the muttering of the thunder, or the stifling atmosphere of the little den. When I awoke it was broad daylight, and our antique bark was leisurely drifting down with the young ebb. A gentle breeze was blowing from the southwest, and Antonio promised to set the sail when we had passed a reach about a mile beyond. At this point the Estero Real forks, and discharges into the Bay of Fonseca by two mouths, the westerly one being the most commonly navigated and safest. The character of the country had changed as we approached the bay. The dense woodland we had passed through the preceding day had given place to low alluvial soil, making out into marshes and cut into numerous small islands. High, rank grass stood along the banks; the waters were agitated with the jumping of fish, which our men said were to be caught in nameless varieties. To the eastward, the distant mountains of Chontales, enveloped in morning mist, peered above the horizon, and a long, low stretch of country, rolling gradually up to the westward, was pointed out as the great volcano of Consiguina, which, in its final eruption in 1836, tore itself to pieces and became extinct, after terrifying all Central America and part of Mexico. The morning breeze blew fresh and welcome, driving before it the mosquitoes and sand-flies. Here and there an alligator stirred the reeds in some distant spot, and the notes of the marsh birds rose clear on the air, reminding me of the brisk autumn mornings of New England, when, gun in hand, *we* had tramped patiently among the damp marshes, and listened to this same shrill piping with an exhilaration that no sweeter songster could create.

Arrived "at point proposed," the *patron* steered for a grassy

bank, where he made fast, and proceeded to elevate for a mast a pole which had occupied nearly the whole length of the bongo. Shrouds were rove and set up, and an immense sail hoisted, *à la leg of mutton*, to the halyard blocks. No sooner was the sheet hauled aft than the old dug-out, as if ashamed of her sluggish movements of the previous day, began to plunge and jerk at her moorings. Antonio rushed aft, kicking over every thing in his way, and planting his foot in the sick man's stomach in his hurry; the crew flew about, jabbering like monkeys; the sail gave one tremendous flap; away came the stakes, and, with a yell from all hands, in which my own voice was not the weakest instrument, the old "Almirante" dashed away toward the tumbling waters of the broad gulf as if in tow of a locomotive. I was astonished at her speed. The sick man raised his visage above the gunwale, stirred into transient life by the exultant racket, but looked dismally ahead to the horizon of tumbling waves, toward which we were flying like an arrow. The "Almirante," with a fair wind, steered wild, and Antonio cast wistful glances seaward, and owned his regret at not having taken my advice at Zempisque, and added a ton or two to the ballast.

Rafael, the Olanchano, had never seen salt water before. The poor fellow clung convulsively to the gunwale, alternately gazing at the staggering motion of the bongo, and inquiringly into my face. I certainly did ask myself how such a spread of canvas was to be got in during a *chubasco*; but the confident air of Antonio dispelled my doubts, and, satisfied that all was right, I lay down, but with a dim foreboding that sleep would not be so easy a matter in the gulf, should the present breeze continue. Onward we flew, and in half an hour were out of the estero, and sweeping steadily over the long, green swell of the Bay of Fonseca.

## CHAPTER VI.

Bay of Fonseca.—Bongo Sailing.—Agua Dulce.—Volcano of Conchagua.—The Eruption of 1835.—Present Appearance.—A *Clubasco*.—Night in the Bay.—Morning.—Tigre Island.—Port Amapala.—Commercial Advantages.—Reception.—“La Calentura.”—Future Prospects of the Island.—Honduras Inter-oceanic Rail-road.—Game.—Hunting Excursion.—Cerro.—The Buccaneers.—British Aggressions.—A Deer.—Playa Bravo.—Turtle Eggs.—The Urraca.—Juacamalla.—Sensonte.—Productions.—The Saw-mill.—President Cabanas.—Climate.—Trade of Amapala.

THE sun burst over the distant mountains of Choluteca, and the morning clouds quickly dissipated before the increasing heat as we sped along. The *patron*, instead of heading directly for Tigre Island, hauled to the westward, and coasted by the Consiguina shore. Years before, while pondering over the map of Central America, I had remarked this bay (and half the world who ever heard of it have done the same) as a mere indentation in the coast, with a few islands at its mouth. Later, after reading the descriptions of recent travelers, and examining the admirable map made under the directions of Sir Edward Belcher, I had come to regard it as an extensive body of water and a good harbor; but not until now, with its magnificent proportions before me, had I formed an accurate conception of its vast capacity, the numerous safe anchorages presented in every part, its navigability, its advantageous position, or the interesting scenery bordering it on all inland sides. The peninsula of Consiguina stretched far into it on the left, the cape, though forming one of the headlands of the entrance, extending beyond our view to the northwest. On the right, the coast, commencing on the Nicaraguan shore, a mere rim of land, lost itself to the northward, the mountains of Honduras seeming to roll up from the water's edge rather than from the interior of a plain many leagues inland. Tigre Island and Sacate Grande, two lofty mountains rising out of the bosom of the bay, appearing mere blue mounds in the distance (and beyond which, in bongo navigation, one may sail a whole day), were pointed out to me by Antonio. It

would be safe to say that the whole mercantile fleet of America might ride in security together in this great southern bay, inferior in no respect to that of San Francisco, and bordered by three states possessed of the greatest natural resources within the tropics, their hills stored with the richest mineral deposits in Spanish America.

As we flew before the fresh breeze, the crew, stretched out in the bongo, and resigning themselves to the freedom of the hour, chanted some of the wild songs of the country, in which, besides the peculiar Spanish airs, I often detected a wild, inharmonious resemblance to the Indian lays. As the long swells rolled swiftly after us, Antonio would utter a loud whoop, not unlike the "*hi yah!*" of a Bowery boy, and, casting a confident glance at the bending mast, bid his patron saint "*soplar!*" with an irreverent addendum, I thought, not calculated to propitiate the holy personage addressed. A box from Chinandega was now opened, displaying a dainty collection of eatables, a large part of which quickly disappeared before the ravenous appetites of the crew. I won their good-will by making an equable division of these viands. There were *catamales* wrapped carefully with fresh corn husks; roast chickens served up in plantain leaves; *salchichas*, *frijolitas* ("flippers," or pan-cakes, with an inner lining of boiled beans), and more fruit than would last us a dozen such voyages. At noon the breeze left us, when the sail was doused, the oars got out, and, after an hour's rowing, the bongo was anchored off the great volcano of Consiguina.

As the tide would not favor us for some hours, I took my rifle, and, selecting two of the brightest-looking of the crew, waded on shore and started for the interior. The coast, trending to the northwest, presents a long extent of sandy beach, which we followed until our progress was stopped by a small fresh stream called *Agua Dulce*, the waters of which are warm, and impregnated with volcanic substances.\* Tracing this among

\* This stream is doubtless referred to by Master Wafer, who sailed for some time with Dampier, and parted with him at Realejo, whence he proceeded to the Bay of Fonseca, in the *Bachelor's Delight*, in 1685. He says: "Being in great want of Provisions while we lay here, we went ashore in order to supply our Necessities at a Beef-Estantion on the Continent to the South of the Cod of the Bay, which lay from the Landing-place about three Mile. On our way we were obliged to pass a hot River in an open *Savannah*, altho' we made some difficulty



brambles and bushes mostly denuded of leaves, we reached an eminence standing to the southward of its bank, up which we scrambled, and surveyed the terrific effects of the great eruption of 1835, which tore the mountain to pieces, and for several days enveloped all Central America and the neighboring countries in ashes and smoke. This is described as the most violent and destructive eruption known in these regions within the memory of man.

In Tegucigalpa, many leagues inland, and thousands of feet above the sea, the city was darkened with showers of ashes. The bellowing of the mountain was heard in Guatemala, and the earth was shaken far into Mexico. So remarkable is this eruption considered, that the inhabitants date from it; and I have frequently heard an event, birth, or death calculated as happening so many years before or after the great eruption of Consiguina. Before that time its peak was lofty, and the form of the volcano conical, like those of Central Nicaragua. It now presents the appearance of having been violently broken off. It stands equidistant between the bay and ocean, the peninsula on which it is situated being about twelve miles across. A scene of desolate grandeur grows upon the beholder who gazes upward toward the crater, of which no reliable account exists since the eruption. The height is estimated to be two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the gradual slope from the bay toward the cone is clothed with impenetrable thicket, and the road intercepted by frightful ravines. These solitudes are rarely visited, and abound in wild animals. My two companions traversed the ground with reluctance, and seemed to think the whole region accursed and dangerous. Vast deposits of lava and cinders thrown from the crater are strewed down to the water's edge.

In the following year, while passing by sea from this bay to San Juan del Sur, I ran my boat closely under the western coast, under Consiguina Point, which here presents a bold, white at it by reason of its Heat. This River issued out from under a Hill; but it was no Vulcan, tho' there are several on this coast. I had the curiosity to wade up the stream as far as I had Day-light to guide me. The Water was clear and shallow, but the Steams under the Hill were like those of a boiling Pot, and my Hair was wet with them. The River without the Hill reek'd for a great way."—*A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*, p. 190.

rocky surface to the sea, and the deposits of lava extend quite to the ocean. Consiguina is not quite extinct, though no eruption has taken place since that of 1835. In December, 1852, a cloud of smoke issued from the crater, accompanied with low mutterings. An impalpable red dust fell in Amapala, Tigre Island, and along the coast of Honduras; but the inhabitants feel no apprehension of any future eruptions. A few white cranes stood silently upon the beach, almost among the ripples, which, from our position, seemed a snowy rim against the clear blue beyond. Our bongo lay motionless a few fathoms from the shore, with a wreath of smoke curling away from her bows, showing that Rafael had at last learned to make coffee *à la California*. A monotonous lowing from a neighboring valley marked the vicinity of some lordly bull, roaming in undisturbed silence amid the woods and plains, but, with these exceptions, the place seemed deserted by all living things. The view included the Honduras mountains, the southern arm of Fonseca Bay, smooth as a mill-pond, the green streak of mangrove and willow skirting the opposite coast, and the great swamp forests toward the Estero Real from which we had just issued. Stretching away inland from where we stood lay an inclined plain, slightly carpeted with new grass, and farther on patches of lava and scoria, bunches of small woods, and desolate, barren places on the distant mountain side. My men were fearful of tigers, which they said abounded here, and, though I was not unwilling to lose a day and make the ascent of Consiguina, the entire crew refused, and quoted the most reliable local authority on the subject of snakes and wild beasts.

Returning to the shore, we found the tide still flowing, and the crew, pulling off their clothes, "tracked" the bongo along the coast, sometimes wading up to their necks in crossing the small creeks making into the bay. Knowing that alligators were plentiful in these waters, I was prepared to see one of the monsters rise among them from the mud, but the noise and splashing made by the men doubtless kept them away. A flock of veritable curlew flew over our heads, with their peculiar piping note, and in plumage and shape answering to the northern bird. These are found on the sea-coast, I believe, throughout Central America. In Fonseca Bay, also, they are very

plentiful, particularly on the flats of Sacate Grande. The stately pelican, with his bag-bill and immense wings, hovered slowly along the coast, ever and anon dropping heavily into the water, seizing his finny prey among the shoals of jumping fish. I threw over a line, but, after an hour's trial, had no success. Toward evening an easterly breeze sprung up, bringing with it the usual premonitors of a squall. The oars were taken in, all hands jumped on board, the great sail was again set, and the bongo once more plunging along on her course. We still hugged the Consiguina shore until the ebb tide began to make, when, being now clear of the land, we shot out into the wide bay. Once past Cape Rosario, and we were, to all appearance, at sea. To leeward rolled the open Pacific, black with storm-clouds, while to windward and ahead, the horizon shut out by the gathering rain and mists, nothing could be seen but an expanse of tumbling water.

The wind increased, until, at sundown, a heavy squall loomed blue and threatening close to windward. The sheet of the sail was tied and jammed with apparently inextricable knots around a bamboo cleet. The darkness and loud thunder-claps increased, and yet Antonio crouched in the stern like a superannuated baboon, without making the least motion to shorten sail. I had made up my mind not to interfere with the bongo seamanship of these fellows, and as the wind struck us in a flurry of rain and spray, I followed the example of all hands, and dodged under the rail, knowing that in Central America to be wet without exercise is to take the *calentura*. The rain poured, the thunder rattled, the bongo staggered along in a smother of foam, and yet our *patron* disdained to reduce a stitch of canvas, until, with a tremendous lurch, the water commenced pouring in over the lee-side in little cascades. The crew and passengers squatted silently in the bottom of the bongo, shivering with the wet. At every surge Antonio luffed her into the wind, and replied to my reiterated "*cuidado!*" with a loud yell. The squall now burst upon us with increased fury; the view was shut out beyond thirty yards around us by the pouring rain. Antonio gave a hurried order to one of his men to haul down the sail as he luffed her into the wind, but before the command could be executed she was nearly capsized. The





BONGO NAVIGATION IN FONSECA BAY.

bongo was half full of water ; and, seeing my baggage swimming amid a wreck of boat's paraphernalia, I thought it time to exercise some authority, especially as I had the most at stake. I was about grasping the tiller so that the *patron* might attend to the sheet, when she made a jump, sending him overboard backward from his seat. I endeavored to seize him, but he disappeared in an instant, and, to my surprise, came up a moment afterward, hanging on tooth and nail to a piece of stray rope, the bongo towing him like a hooked dolphin. After a while we dragged him on board, when, having blown the water from his mouth, an appeal to the aguardiente bottle put him again to rights. By this time the sail had been lowered, and, the squall over, our boat was bailed out. Every thing was soaked and nearly ruined.

As the weather cleared up, I observed that we had got far into the gulf. To the northwest lay the island of Mianguera, dimly discernible through the darkness, its tall, bluff banks covered with thick verdure, resembling the outlines of some gaunt old castle. Directly ahead, El Tigre reared its lofty proportions, but now appearing a mere shadow. A few stars showed themselves among the clouds which hurried seaward, portending, as



Antonio observed, "*mucho viento en la noche.*" But gradually the wind subsided, until we were once more becalmed under Mianguera. The tide being against us, the stone which served as an anchor was thrown overboard, and some arrangements were made for a few hours' sleep. We lay anchored between Mianguera and El Tigre during the night, a strong wind blowing from the N.E. causing the bongo to roll incessantly in the swell. Several times I awoke and surveyed the scene, which was one of peculiar interest. The bay abounds in vast shoals of sardines, which, coursing swiftly past our anchorage, produced a phosphorescent light often witnessed at sea in calm weather. These great illuminated streaks shot around us in all directions, gleaming brightly as they approached the surface, or fading into an indistinct greenish tint when darting to a greater depth. At times a porpoise or puffing-pig explored his solitary way against the tide, or the distant cry of some water-bird came faintly through the darkness. To the westward, the surf along the shore of Conchaguita and Mianguerita kept up its ceaseless war. Away toward Nicaragua the horizon was illumined with flickering traces of lightning darting in faint lines along the sky, denoting the passage of some midnight thunderstorm amid the pine-clad mountains of Chontales.

The excitement of the previous day, added to the dampness and crowded condition of the bongo, left me no alternative but to wrap my *poncho* closely about me, light my meerschaum, and so pass the night gazing through the misty darkness at the scenery, and listening to the heavy breathing of the sleepers. Morning gradually crept over the waters, and as the gray clouds which capped the eastern hills became tinted with the approaching dawn, I roused all hands, and, the anchor being drawn up, we took the favorable tide and headed once more for Tigre Island. At this moment a fair wind, in a series of cat's-paws, came over the glassy surface of the water, which shortly increased to a breeze. Antonio took the helm; the aguardiente bottle was again circulated; Rafael renewed his coffee-making operations; the sail bellied out to the freshening gale: the Masters Dardano looked curiously toward their island home, which they had not seen for several years. Every thing was now in glorious contrast to the previous night. The long, dangerous sea had

subsided, leaving a clear blue expanse of water sparkling in the morning sunlight; our clumsy old craft skimmed over the rippling waters with the speed of a race-horse.

As I sipped the coffee between the comfortable whiffs of my pipe, I had an excellent opportunity to estimate the wonderful capacity of this noble bay. We had now shut out the ocean beyond the outer islands, and were cutting through an expanse of water, smooth as a trout-lake, but deep enough to float the largest ships in the world; not a hidden rock or shoal in any direction; the *playas* or beaches approachable with large ships to within pistol-shot of the rocks, and room to anchor or moor a thousand vessels, even in the comparative nook made by the four islands, which here form almost a completely land-locked circle of water, in which the frailest canoe might safely navigate.

So rapidly did we shoot onward that I had scarcely time to note the quick succession of glorious views and picturesque scenery which, with every turn, opened their beauties. My companions, intent on *cigarros* and *aguardiente*, gazed listlessly at the prospect, and said nothing; a course which pleased me best, as, without a kindred spirit to enjoy the splendors of nature, silence alone is the fittest accompaniment. We were soon under the shadows of El Tigre, which loomed three thousand feet above us, its steep sides loaded with verdure, from among which might be selected fifty varieties of valuable woods and plants growing wild and unclaimed. The same might be said of not only every island in this archipelago, but of the entire coast of the main land.

It was not until we were closely coasting the gigantic masses of lava, skirting the island like a wall of jet its entire circumference, that I obtained an idea of its extent, while the summit, lost in a cloud-cap, seemed even loftier from the extreme base. The volcano rises in an exact cone as beautifully rounded as if erected by art, plainly indicating the manner of its formation. I traveled around it by land, and half the same distance by boat, several times, and neither on the shore nor at the summit, the ascent of which I made some months later, could a stone or rock of any kind be found; the island, volcano, every thing, is of volcanic formation; even the foundations of the houses, fences, and attempts at wharves are of this material.

We rounded point after point, forming the numerous accessible beaches of the island, until we entered the port of Amapala, a harbor within a harbor, the most secluded, accessible, sheltered, and, in every respect, excellent port on the Pacific coast. Amapala is thirty-five miles from the mouth of the Estero Real, and eight from the nearest point of the main land. It is formed by an indentation (*playa*) on the northern side of the island, there being from three to six fathoms for a distance of two miles in the space formed by the islands of Esposescion, Sacate Grande, and El Tigre. Each of these have good landings in numerous places, but the western exposure renders them rough ports during heavy winds from that quarter, while Amapala, fronting toward the main land, may be entered with a canoe in the heaviest weather. But so equable and mild are the seasons in this region, that no long gales, like those in the north, are ever experienced, while any sea raised by a temporary high wind generally subsides with the abatement of the storm.

As we neared the little town, my friends the Dardanos became greatly excited with the prospect of meeting their mother and sister, who stood at the door of a neat, American-looking cottage, waving scarfs toward the boat. Our bongo-men now donned their "along-shore toggery," consisting of a clean cotton shirt and trowsers; the little white flag was hoisted, and the rifles and pistols of the entire party called into requisition for a grand *feu de joie* in honor of the ladies. The Sardinian and American flags were run up at the flag-staff of the *cuartel*, and the four-pounder, mounted in front of the door, was made to thunder its welcome. It being nearly high water, the bongo dropped anchor; and now, mounting the backs of two stout fellows who waded out to accommodate us, we were landed, and heartily welcomed in good English by several gentlemen, among whom were Italians, French, Germans, and Americans, all employed on the island, some as store-keepers, others as clerks to the house of Dardano & Müller, and the Americans owning a saw-mill in the eastern end of the town, which, in answer to the kind invitation of the proprietors, I promised to visit the following day.

The first impression on landing at Tigre Island is its splendid facilities for fortification, and the formation of a great central commercial *dépôt* from which to command the trade of the three

states bordering on the Bay of Fonseca. Its resources fully developed, Amapala might be made the most important port on the Pacific south of San Francisco. In 1850, Mr. E. G. Squier, during his chargéship, forwarded a series of dispatches to the U. S. government, in which he advocated the advantages of entering into negotiations with Honduras for the establishment of a naval station at Amapala. Should this plan be adopted, the yearly-increasing means of communication between California and the eastern states would soon place a U. S. Pacific squadron within seven days of Washington. With the construction of the contemplated Honduras rail-road, and the appliances of telegraphs and steamers, government orders of the most vital importance to the nation could be transmitted to the Pacific squadron in three and a half days. The town is now the principal, or, rather, only real port where large vessels or steamers may anchor and discharge on the Pacific coast of the three republics of Honduras, Salvador, or Nicaragua.

A short walk through a collection of semi-American dwellings brought us to the house of Señor Dardano, where we found the ladies and our bongo companions exchanging the news. After a cordial reception at the hands of the party, comfortable quarters were established for me at the house of Mr. Müller near by. Don Carlos was expected with two daughters from Tegucigalpa, on their way from the United States by the way of Omoa and Comayagua. Having letters of introduction to him, I determined not to commence my journey into the interior of Honduras without obtaining information from a gentleman whose thirty years' residence in the country enabled him to impart valuable advice and information respecting political and other matters.

On the evening after my arrival, a sense of dizziness, with quickened pulse and intense headache, warned me that my frequent wettings in the Bay of Fonseca by rains and tide were not to pass without the usual penalty of *calentura*, which, up to this time, my good constitution seemed to have bid defiance to. Few escape this scourge, which in intertropical regions, especially on the coast lowlands, is almost certain to overtake the foreigner. I was well fortified with quinine and other medicines, furnished me by my good friend the doctor at Chinandega, which, with the kind attentions of my hostess and her family,



at last put an end to the disease, but not until its effects had left me pallid and exhausted, and bearing the peculiar cadaverous hue of the fever-stricken stranger. The attack is usually of one type along the Central American coast, but is admitted by all to be far less dangerous and virulent on the Pacific than on the Atlantic side. The *tertiana* most prevails; its effects are prostrating in the extreme, and the patient at last, struggling again into daylight and air, experiences a giddy, languid sensation, as if issuing from a fainting-fit. The remedies are simple, easily obtained in the towns, and consist of quinine and purgatives. Many superstitions exist as to the violence of the fever being affected by the changes of the moon, the height of the tide, direction of the wind, and time of attack. Certain rules are usually enforced, such as abstaining from washing the hands or face during the fever, the maxim used in reply to a doubt of this last treatment being, "Better be dirty above ground than clean under it!" a fact few are disposed to dispute, and one which the old nurses of the country always repeat, while the patient is denied the use of water except to drink sparingly. During this my first illness in Central America, I received such attentions at the hands of my hospitable entertainers as I had hardly dared hope for when leaving home for a journey among strangers, and those whom I had been prepared to regard as semi-civilized and ignorant. Physician I had none; and after-experience taught me that the less the foreigner has to do with the native doctor, the longer may be his life lease. I often had occasion to witness the blind blundering and absurd practice of the Central American *medico*, whose quackery, equal to that of the veriest American empiric, was rendered all the more dangerous from lacking the example of better-informed practitioners, and the intelligence to benefit from experience.

Once up from my sick-couch, where, in the silence of the live-long day, I had ample leisure to digest my plans for the future, and I issued forth into the busy little world of Tigre Island with additional zest to enjoy the beautiful scenery for which it has ever been celebrated. A volume might be written descriptive of the advantageous situation of the island; its remarkable resources, agricultural and commercial; the many acres of valuable woods and precious plants, roots, and shrubs growing

throughout its broad expanse. The island itself is capable of sustaining, on the level lands contained between the *playas* and the base of the volcano rising from its centre, a population of twenty thousand people. The town of Amapala, situated on the eastern *playa*, stretches back over a rolling plain, gradually ascending toward the slope of the mountain, and extends a distance of three quarters of a mile along the harbor. Its commanding military position, the general salubrity of the climate, and the future commerce, of which approaching events seem to denote this place as the key, point to Tigre Island as destined to become, ere long, an important and wealthy emporium.

The adjacent coasts offer facilities for the raising of untold quantities of the produce of all climates, from the cereal grains of the north to the cacao, sugar, and indigo of the tropics. Such is the diversity of the country, that in a day one may descend from the cool, grain-growing uplands in some portions of Salvador and Honduras into regions teeming with the rarest tropical plants. Castellon referred with all the zeal of a republican enthusiast to his plan of constructing a rail-road from some point on the western shore of Lake Nicaragua to the head of navigation of the Estero Real, to connect by ocean steamers with the fine port of Amapala; a scheme which, though less feasible than other proposed routes, is not an impracticable one, and has, since my conversation with Castellon on the subject, been seriously contemplated by a succeeding administration.

The adjacent republics bordering on the Bay of Fonseca form also one of the richest mineral districts in the world, the resources of which, save the occasional exports from the Atlantic coast via Truxillo, Omoa, and Balize, have, until the discovery of California and the consequent opening of the various routes of travel, been almost hidden from the world. The agricultural products of these republics are yet unknown except to a few foreigners, who have crossed the continent at these points, and those whom the love of adventure has drawn to Central America during the past twelve months. These alone are such as to furnish the basis of a large trading town at Amapala, from which the large consuming population in the interior could be supplied. Amapala is the only port where large vessels can securely and advantageously anchor. The other islands of this

archipelago are uninhabitable, or so environed with reefs and rocks as to be useless for the purposes of commerce. This superiority was early noticed by Don Carlos Dardano, an Italian merchant, who, marrying a lady of Tegucigalpa, became entitled to all the privileges of citizenship, and in 1846 obtained from the government of Honduras a grant of several *caballerias* of land on condition that he should clear a certain space of ground, establish a trading-post, and make it his place of residence. The settlement of Amapala was thus commenced, and created a free port by the government for ten years. Under the energetic exertions of Señor Dardano, the town became at last a rival of La Union, the principal port of San Salvador on the northern border of the bay, and is now the seat of a considerable local traffic, which is often increased by the arrival of foreign vessels, discharging at this point the goods intended for trade with the interior. Considerable jealousy has arisen between the merchants of San Salvador and Tigre Island in consequence, but the advantages of Amapala over the shallow, secluded port of La Union are too apparent to need repetition.

Here, too, among several discrecional places, may be located the terminus of the Honduras inter-oceanic rail-road, which, commencing on the Caribbean Sea, is designed to pass through the beautiful valley of Comayagua, a distance of one hundred and forty-eight miles, and with an average grade, as the report of the surveys of Mr. E. G. Squier states, of only twenty-eight feet to the mile. While Panama and Nicaragua were early made the field of American enterprise for the establishment of an inter-oceanic communication, it is somewhat singular that speedier attention was not directed to this route to the Pacific, which is shorter than any other, not excepting that of Tehuantepec, and offers facilities for the construction of an inter-oceanic rail-road not exceeded or equaled by any other. The terms of the charter obtained by Mr. Squier from the supreme government are the best proof of the liberality of Honduras in these respects, and the earnest desire she has of opening up the resources of the country. Extraordinary inducements are offered for the furthering of this great enterprise, one of the principal of which is the existence of safe and capacious harbors at either terminus (an advantage not possessed by the Tehuantepec route), and the com-

parative small amount of grading and bridging to be done. Not only these facts, but the bare existence of the route, has remained, until recently, unknown abroad, save by those interested in the project. The most violent opponents of American influence in Honduras, and those whose political prejudices have instigated them to assail the project at the risk of the progress of the country, admit that the completion of the proposed rail-road would at once place the republic in advance of all other Spanish-American states. The road could be extended across the southern end of Sacate Grande, and, crossing a narrow and shallow reef between the two islands, be made to terminate at Tigre Island, where abundant material is found for the construction of wharves, at which the largest steamers in the world might tie up in perfect security. The attention now being turned toward Central America has inspired the people of Honduras with renewed hope, and the ultimate completion of the rail-road is anxiously looked for. Its effects upon the prosperity of the country would be incalculable, while Amapala would spring suddenly into a position of commercial importance rivaling that of any other port south of San Francisco.

The island, excepting the few cleared level spaces near the shores, is densely wooded, and an abundance of game may be found by an expert huntsman. Deer, and several of the smaller tropical animals, are frequently shot, and in the earlier days of the settlement tigers were often seen among the jungle, crashing away from the intruder, and springing out of sight. These have been nearly all shot off; but on some of the eastern playas they are yet occasionally met with, and, at long intervals, the remains of a defunct cow, torn to pieces in the woods, prove that these animals are not yet exterminated. When Señor Dardano settled upon the island, deer frequently came within pistol-shot of his house.

Hearing so much of the game and desiring to see the western part of the island, I employed a wide-awake looking native, who enjoyed the reputation of a successful hunter, to accompany me on a tour of exploration. My object was principally to view the scenery, and ascertain the extent of available land radiating from the base of the volcano. On the day previous to my anticipated ramble I obtained an excellent shot-gun from a German



acquaintance, which I gave Nolberto to carry, reserving my rifle for my own use. The dawn was faintly streaking the eastern horizon and tinting the mountains of Choluteca when I felt my arm touched, and the low voice of Rafael warning me that my guide was waiting. I invariably slept in a hammock, as much for the coolness of this style of bed as to avoid the regiments of fleas which seem to haunt the steps of the Spanish race. I looked out, and found my faithful attendant waiting patiently beside the hammock, holding a cup of hot coffee "*con leche*," and my meerschaum preparatory to the tramp. These dispatched, we hastily donned our hunting gear and sallied out into the dark, the silence unbroken except by the croaking of night animals and the humming of countless insects. From some far-away *playa* the bark of the watch-dog came faintly through the morning air, and at intervals the tiny ripple of the flood tide broke softly along the beach. Nolberto lit a *cigarro*, and, taking the lead, we were quickly beyond the precincts of the town, and plunged into a labyrinth of crooked paths, winding among the shrubbery, and requiring the greatest caution to avoid stumbling over the many half-buried masses of lava, which, rolling down the sides of the volcano, have become imbedded in the soil. At my desire, my guide first directed his steps toward a hill situated about a mile from the town, and rising to an elevation of about six hundred feet above the surrounding plain.

We scrambled for half an hour among intricate cattle-paths, until, reaching the foot of the hill, we struggled up and gained the summit just as the sun shot up from a sea of golden clouds above the mountains to the eastward. The view from this point is necessarily limited, and embraces only the northern and western portions of the bay; that from the summit of the volcano, which reared its head two thousand feet above us, is one of the finest in the Western world. Some months afterward, when I made its ascent in company with a few friends, the party unanimously voted this view to be the most extensive and magnificent they had ever witnessed. From this position, however, the scene was interesting and striking, affording a glimpse of the mountain scenery of San Salvador and Honduras, and seaward a horizon of blue water, indistinct in the distance with the morning mists, and roaring in banks of foam along the rocky barriers

below. Beneath us lay a small lake, covering a space of a few acres, and now coated with a thick mass of moss and parasitical plants, some of which, taking root in the bottom of the lake, climbed among the surrounding trees.

On the small space of table-land forming the top of the hill are traces of forts erected by the buccaneers of the seventeenth century. They could scarcely have selected a fitter retreat, the port offering ample shelter for their vessels, which were overlooked and protected by the fort. Here doubtless, in the old days of the *flibusteros*, the pirates of the Pacific held their councils, and from this point planned many of their marauding descents upon the neighboring coasts. Here the English are said to have erected a battery, and from this height their flag floated in 1849, at which time they seized and claimed Tigre Island. Don Carlos Dardano gave me a detailed account of the operations of the British at Amapala, in which it appeared that, in an evil hour, he had accepted the control of the island under the usurpers, and, in consequence, had lost favor with the Honduras government upon its restoration to its legitimate owners.

A considerable expanse of level land lies beneath the hill, and a fine fertile valley is formed by this elevation and the slope of the volcano. Amid the foliage appeared the low adobe or branch huts of the islanders, most of whom gain a scanty livelihood by cultivating a small patch of ground, or engage in the various avocations of the neighboring settlement. After taking a long gaze at the romantic scenery spread beyond and beneath us, we resumed our tramp toward a secluded piece of woodland on the western shore of the island, where deer were said to abound. The rains of the previous day had imparted a wholesome freshness to the atmosphere, which, amid the shady dells through which we made our way, seemed to approximate to the invigorating quality of a spring morning in New England. Our way led around the western end of the island, and half an hour's traveling brought us into a deep forest of *ceibas*, *guapinoles*, and palms so dense that we made our way only by thrusting aside the rank and matted undergrowth. Presently we came to a level cleared space, and Nolberto having intimated that we might expect game here, we crept softly along toward the brink of a ravine, through which a rivulet flowed quietly toward the

ocean. The tracks newly-imprinted in the damp soil gave token that we were in the vicinity of deer. We seated ourselves on a rock, and, as the sun had now begun to penetrate the surrounding woods, my companions produced a cotton cloth filled with eatables, and commenced spreading them out, when, turning toward a copse twenty yards distant, my eyes met those of a beautiful doe, standing erect, and gazing with silent wonder upon our movements. Without uttering a word to my companions, who, as yet, were unconscious of the presence of game, I brought down my rifle, startling them with its sharp ring, as, at the same moment, the animal disappeared in the woods. Dropping the table paraphernalia, my men sprang after her, and in a few moments their shouts told me the bullet had done its work. Rafael was dispatched to town for a horse, while we cut up the game in readiness for his return. Sending him back with his load, Nolberto and myself continued the hunt.

As we penetrated the glades the game increased; but, though we had several capital opportunities, our luck had departed. The deer on Tigre Island are similar to those of the main land, and are of the small, fallow species. In the interior they are found in herds, so plentiful, indeed, in some sections, that laborers engaging to work on plantations are represented to have a special understanding with the proprietor of the estate that the food shall be beef, and not venison.

Antelopes are said to abound, though their existence is doubted by some writers on Central America. What is called the mountain antelope is common in the interior, but this animal is doubtless often confounded with the fallow deer. A sudden stirring among the foliage on the lonely mountain road often denotes their proximity to the traveler. Henderson mentions the gazelle as inhabiting the woodlands of Balize, which, he says, has been considered the *Dorcas*, or barbarian antelope of Linnæus. It is about half the size of the deer.

We rounded the thickly-wooded slope of the volcano, and emerging, after an hour's walk, into an open space carpeted with grass and low, tangled vines, we heard, coming faintly through the forest, the roar of the ocean as it broke upon the southern beach. Half an hour's scrambling among briers and dark thickets brought us to the surf, now tumbling in with long, regular

swells. Here we traced the distant outline of the volcano of Consiguina, its ragged sides bristling against the sky, while on the opposite side, to the northward, the great headland of San Salvador, Conchagua, reared its head, the two forming a resemblance to the Pillars of Hercules, or, more aptly, to the Golden Gate. From this position, one is at once struck with the similarity of scenery and formation between the bays of Fonseca and San Francisco. It needs but the splash of the steamer beating these silent waters into sparkling foam to complete the likeness.

As we stood on the beach, my attention was attracted to numerous holes in the sand, which, on examining, I found to be turtles' nests. One of these we laid siege to, and after scraping away near half a ton of sand, the carefully-concealed treasure began to appear. They were about the size of hens' eggs, but of a soft consistency. They were deposited with great care, each egg being surrounded with a close covering of sand, and so placed as not to come in contact with each other. After thirty or forty had been dragged forth, Nolberto assumed my place, and, baring his arm, pulled them out, one by one, until a hundred and nineteen were exposed to view. He said they were never eaten on the island, and humanely recommended me to let him cover them up again, which he did with commendable care. I learned, however, on the following day, that the abominable rogue had returned and robbed the nest, to an egg, for his own private eating. They are really excellent, as I afterward ascertained by frequent trial. The name of the beach upon which we stood was the *Playa Bravo*. It is inaccessible for boats.

We found wild cattle and deer trail extending quite down to the ocean, and following the bank of a stream into some unfrequented part of the interior. We returned by a new path, leading around the base of the mountain, which at every moment showed its lofty head among the clouds as we scrambled through the shrubbery. On our way we were followed by a flock of *urracas*, a species of blue magpie, with a bill and tongue somewhat resembling the parrot. One of them, which I wounded, uttered a continuous scream, drawing his comrades close around us. At times they would swoop down almost to within arms' length, regard us fiercely for a moment, and then, whirling away to a neighboring branch, sit with fluttering wings and



open beaks, responding to the cries of their wounded companion. I did not see this bird in the highlands of the continent, and presume from that fact that they are confined to the coast. The *juacamalla*, decked in his burning plumage, the parrot in several varieties, the *oripendole*, with his gay dress, and saucy, dancing motion as he cuts through the air; the blue heron, the purple-breasted mourning dove, the *sensonte*, and the nightingale, are all found in the woods of Tigre Island. The *juacamalla*, a species of the macaw, is the dandy *par excellence* of

the Central American forest. His flashy livery, always heralded by the harsh scream of its owner, may be seen from afar amid the topmost branches of the largest trees, where he sits coquetishly arranging his feathers, or indulging in his favorite pastime of hanging from some giddy limb with his head down, screaming in reply to a distant acquaintance, or anx-



THE JUACAMALLA.

iously surveying the prospect below. The *sensonte* (*cien sonta*, or bird of a hundred songs) is the veritable American mocking-bird. Nothing can surpass his delicious notes. In shape, plumage, habits, and general appearance he is scarcely to be distinguished from the Northern bird. The bill is a trifle longer, and the throat a little more full. One which I have in my room as I write was given me, with two others, in Amapala during my first visit there. Two did not survive the voyage to California. The remaining one has now attained his full voice and plumage, and, besides possessing all the notes of the American mocking-bird, has brought with him some foreign airs never heard out of the tropics. Among all feathered songsters, give me the Central American *sensonte* for richness and variety. I have oft-

en observed these graceful creatures bathing at some quiet rill in Olancho, where they particularly abound. Here they stand daintily among the clean pebbles, and take turns in diving into the brook, splashing boldly about with a quick flutter of wings, and uttering an occasional delighted squeak. At one place where I used to resort at morning for a similar purpose, I was always certain of a mocking-bird concert from among the neighboring foliage.

It was not until my rambles about the island enabled me to view the scenery from numerous elevations that I obtained an adequate idea of the extent of open, undulating country it contains, sloping away from the base of the volcano into fertile plains capable of sustaining many thousands of people. The soil is extremely rich, and covered during the greater part of the year with a hundred varieties of herbage and bushes. Here the Peruvian gum—gum Arabic—and other species of the acacia flourish. The wild grape, *papaya*, *lime*, *mamaya*, *lobelia*, *fustic*, *mango*, palm (of many varieties), *guapinol*, mahogany, *ron ron*, may be pointed out in the woods, unclaimed and uncared for. Not a thousandth part of the arable land of the island is under cultivation; and yet, with an energetic race, such as our own earnest and progressive people, to inhabit and improve the three rich republics bordering upon Fonseca Bay, Tigre Island could hardly fail to become, in more respects than one, the most important post on the Pacific.

Amapala differs from every other Central American town in the industry exhibited by its inhabitants, and in this respect bears a stronger resemblance to an American settlement than any other I visited. Here is the only saw-mill on the Pacific shore of Honduras. It is owned by two enterprising Americans, who imported the machinery from New York, originally for the purpose of establishing a cotton manufactory in San Miguel, San Salvador. The enterprise fell through for want of capital and labor, after which the machinery was brought to Amapala, where for two years it has done good service in converting into boards the timber from the neighboring coasts. The principal market is Callao. A Peruvian brig was loading in the harbor during my first visit. The lumber, most of which is cedar of a very superior quality, brings from \$35 to \$45 per

thousand. The towns surrounding the bay, and for some distance into the interior, are also an unfailing market. But one run of saws was in operation, which the proprietors said supplied the demand. The logs are cut by whipsaws in the mouth of the Choluteca and Goascoran rivers, and are rafted by bongo power to the mill, where there is sufficient depth of water to admit them quite to the platform. Here the drag-chain takes the logs at once into the mill. The principal amusement at Amapala is to stroll over to *la maquina* and gaze at the Titanic force of steam-power.

The proprietors had many difficulties to contend with, such as government restrictions, prohibitions, delays, suspicions, and jealousies. On the entrance of Cabanas into the presidency, the necessary documents were at once passed. During this visit at Amapala, the thermometer indicated in the shade at no time above 99°, and in the early morning I found it to reach 78°. The average temperature during the day was 92°. The town is so situated as to receive the sea-breeze, which sets in at ten o'clock A.M., and continues until toward evening, when the land-breeze, at first faintly indicated, increases, and before night grows into the never-failing *chubasco*. At this hour very heavy clouds blow rapidly up from the southward, and the rain is usually of great violence. The climate of the island is considered healthy, the fevers of the country being of a less virulent type than on the adjoining coast. No foreigner, however, need expect to escape the fever in Central America even with the greatest degree of care.

With the exception of two or three shingled and clap-boarded dwellings, the houses of Amapala are similar to those of other small Central American towns. Some few are of adobe, but the greater part of cane and branches. The business of the place at the time of my visit was confined to the small trade of the house of Dardano and Müller. This consisted of osnaburgs, drillings, hardware, dry goods, and general articles of European manufacture, which were received in exchange for hides, deer-skins, cacao, sugar, vanilla, indigo, and a few other products of the neighboring coast, but in very small quantities. The trade was extremely limited and jealously divided with the adjacent port of La Union in San Salvador. No regular exchange can be estab-

lished at Tigre Island until the government of the country becomes firmly fixed, and an end put to the oft-recurring revolutions.

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## CHAPTER VII.

A Tiger-hunt on Sacate Grande.—Esposescion.—Oysters.—Fish.—Alligators.—A Swimming Escape.—Life in Amapala.—Arrival of Don Carlos and Family.—Grand Festivities.—Preparations for Departure.—“Hurrying up” a Bongo-man.—Another Night in the Bay.—La Brea.—Nocturnal Visitors.—A Night Ramble.—Resolutions for the future.—The Road to Nacaome.—Agua Caliente.—Iguanas.—Nacaome.—La Senora Caret.—Visiting.—A Review.—Climate.—An Old Speculator.—Honduras Coal-mines.—Pastimes.—New method of expelling Dogs.—Demand for Medical Services.—A foreign “Medico.”—A Serenade.

SACATE GRANDE is the name of a mountainous island standing a few miles north of El Tigre, and separated from the main land by a channel which, I believe, is quite dry at extreme low tides. On a clear, still morning, my friend Don Julio knocked at my room door with an invitation to join a tiger-hunt to take place on that day. The announcement, coupled as it was with visions of exciting sport and a dash of romantic adventure, was enough to send me out of my hammock at a leap. I dressed in a trice, and had barely time to swallow the coffee which Rafael had in readiness for me, when a loud call from my companion warned me that, in this instance at least, the usual Spanish *poco a poco*, i. e., take it easy, of Central America was to be discarded. Seizing my rifle and accoutrements, I had only time to leap into the bongo, moored off the warehouse, and join the party of five it contained, ere the anchor was jerked on board, and, spreading the huge sail, we sped away toward the green woodland forming the southern slope of the island, where tigers were fierce and plenty. Once under way, and I had time to study my companions. Don Julio was a florid-faced German, an enthusiastic Nimrod, and speaking English like a native. My former indefatigable guide in the Playa Bravo expedition, and two *tigreros*, or tiger-hunters, from the highlands of Nicaragua, completed the party. For some days past had they been preparing for a hunt, and were excited to unwonted activity by the



news received over night through a young native from the island, who now, squatting in the bows of the dug-out, gazed with earnest eyes upon the preparations. This fellow occupied a small hut in a ravine near the western shore of Sacate Grande, where he was employed by a Salvadorean family to tend the cattle, which, as their property, roam over the island. On the night previous a young heifer had been destroyed, and he had tracked the tiger to a dense thicket on the borders of a stream emptying into the bay. All this was told by the voluble Nolberto, who looked eagerly forward to the chase. Three ugly but intelligent-looking dogs patiently awaited the coming contest.

Rounding the western point of the island, a shallow little bay lay before us, into which the bow was turned, and with the help of the oars we were soon ashore, and, following the lead of our boy-guide, entered his rude *chosa*, or cabin, where he explained the details of the cattle-killing, and offered to direct us to the place to which he had tracked them. The Central American tiger is one of the most formidable animals on the continent, and often measures seven feet in length. The strength of the creature is such that a single well-directed spring suffices to throw down a cow, or, if he fails in the first attempt, leaping upon the back of the victim, he fastens his fangs into the throat and sucks its life-blood. In Nicaragua the cattle estates suffer greatly from them, and in Olancho and Yoro, in Honduras, a bounty is paid by the local government for their destruction. Hunters and *vaqueros* are sometimes torn and killed by tigers, and thus there seems to have grown up a settled animosity between them.

These stories, which, having heard from more reliable sources, I could believe, were now exaggerated by the excited crowd, and it may be well imagined that one whose previous sporting had been mainly confined to quail and snipe shooting, with an occasional rifle-crack at a coyote or antelope in California, entered this new and rather perilous arena with some trepidation. Mine was the only rifle in the party, the rest being armed with English guns, and excepting that of the German, sorry enough weapons for such service. The arrangements being made, each shouldered his piece, and, taking a muddy cattle-trail leading among low, stunted shrubbery, not unlike the whortleberry bush

of the North, we proceeded in single file toward the jungle designated by our guide, and which he pointed out in a wooded ravine on a rising ground beyond. After a few minutes' walk, our boy stopped and showed us the tracks of the beast, and farther on we came to a break in the bushes, where, after killing the heifer, he had dragged the body through the underbrush. The tracks were of such formidable dimensions that, together with my own inexperience and want of faith in the craft of my companions, I found my tiger-hunting mania growing momentarily less as the probability of his appearing became more certain.

The two boys were now sent across the ravine with directions to trace the footprints, and ascertain if his tigership had ascended the hill beyond, a fact which the spongy nature of the ravine would enable them to detect at once. In a few minutes they returned with the intelligence that he had not passed that way since the previous night; and as the traces we had seen thus far showed his steps to have been into the ravine, we were now certain of his locality. How to dislodge him was the next point. The two *tigreros* showed no disposition to enter the place where the soft, yielding soil offered no chance to escape before the leaps of the velvet-footed enemy. Up to this time the dogs had been kept with a contrivance of raw-hide slips around their noses by way of muzzles. They were shaggy, diminutive creatures, with none of the usual yelping enthusiasm shown by the canine race when about attacking in company with man a common enemy. At a gesture and a half-uttered s—s—st, all their latent fury seemed concentrated in their flaming eyes. They knew their work was about to commence. The apparent apathy gave place to savage howls and gnashing of jaws. My respect for them began to increase. At the removal of the muzzles, the three disappeared into the thicket. The *tigreros* awaited the result with staring eyes and motionless attitudes. A sense of approaching danger stole over me in spite of my efforts to conceal it, and though I asked hurriedly if the animal would make his appearance in our direction, the response of my nearest neighbor was only an unintelligible whisper. The sound of the dogs as they vanished in the woods was silenced for a moment, but immediately we heard a terrific dying yell, telling too plainly the

fate of one. Then came a continuous snarl and roar, mingled with the quick bark of the remaining dogs and the crashing of underbrush. A moment after, the bushes near a small gully became violently agitated. I fixed my eyes intently on the spot, involuntarily edging away from the place, springing back in alarm as the yielding bushes made room for the tiger, who threw himself clear of the copse with a light, cat-like leap, and stood a moment in savage uncertainty whether to retreat again into the jungle or face the human foes who environed him. The dogs followed close upon his heels. The whole affair occupied but a moment. I remember the whiskered jaws, the fierce, gleaming eye, the velvety fur, the nervous twitching of the curling tail, the panting of the dun-colored belly, as the beast, directing his gaze upon the place where Nolberto and myself were standing, made a rapid bound toward us. My first impulse was to fire; but a strange fascination, which I am unable to account for, prevented me.

"*Cuidado! por Dios cuidado!*" shouted the others, while, at the same time, three shots rang in my ears.

The next moment I was on my face at full length, and the tiger stretched upon the ground within four feet of me, creating a whirlwind of grass and torn sod in his dying struggles. As he sprang forward I had started from his path, and, stumbling, fell in the very spot where, but for the bullets that arrested his career, he must in another moment have stood.

I was not long in regaining my feet and lodging a rifle bullet in his head, which nearly finished him. The *tigreros* now approached, and deliberately searched his heart with their glittering *cuchillos*, or butcher-knives. A long, gasping yawn, a convulsive play of the tail, and all was over. They wiped their knives on his glossy coat, and one, venturing into the copse, dragged out the mangled body of the dog. Not the mark of a tooth was to be found, but apparently one blow of the great paw, bristling with claws, had disemboweled him. The tiger measured six feet four inches from the rump-bone to the tip of the nose, and was admitted by all to be one of the largest ever killed on the island. The dogs evinced none of the usual desire to tear the body or yelp around it, but, smelling at the wounds, skulked stealthily about, eyeing the *tigreros*. Half an

hour sufficed to take off the skin; it was thrown into the bottom of the bongo, after which, thanks to the providence of Nolberto, a palatable breakfast was spread in the hut, to which all paid their respects. This was my first tiger-hunt, and, though my companions were sure there was a female with cubs in the vicinity, and offered to renew the sport on the following day, I was content to make this my last adventure of the kind on Sacate Grande.

Some of the finest cattle in the state are found grazing here. The island is the property of two Salvadorean families, who value the land and cattle at \$40,000. A medicinal spring exists on the island, to which some of the inhabitants of the coast towns attribute miraculous properties. This spring is said to have made its appearance during the great eruption of Consiguina in 1835. Sacate Grande has been mentioned as the terminus of the proposed Honduras Inter-oceanic Rail-road, but its lack of a port like that of Amapala will always prevent its being used for that purpose. After our meal of tortillas, coffee, and roast chicken, we re-entered the bongo and rowed over to the adjacent island of Esposescion, where the finest oysters in the bay are found in inexhaustible quantities. At low tide our men started out, and in half an hour had loaded the bongo with these worshipful shell-fish. The feast we afterward made on them at El Tigre forever disabused my mind of the idea that good oysters can only be obtained outside the tropics. For fatness and flavor, I have never eaten better in the United States.

With a fair wind and a bongo-load of oysters, we once more headed for Amapala, and as we lowered our sail and prepared to land, the inevitable and merciless *chubasco* was upon us with a torrent of rain, drenching us to the skin. The Bay of Fonseca is not only rich in shell-fish, but its waters literally swarm with a variety of delicious pan and other fish, whose names, even, are unknown. During two visits of several weeks, each at different seasons, I saw no piscatory attempt made by the Amapalans, and the only fish eaten while I was on the island were the product of a few hours with hook and line in a small bongo, in company with my servant, who did little else than take the fish from my hook and hand me bait. Sturgeon and



sharks abound, but besides, there are tomcod, perch, rock-fish (in the outer bay), smelts, and at least a dozen others, the names of which I could never learn. A fishing vessel might realize good returns in this bay with apparatus for salting. Clams and crabs are had for the trouble of taking, and wild fowl swarm upon the playas and mud-flats of the main land. I know of no more promising locality in America for bagging snipe, duck, curlew, and birds of that description, than is offered in many localities in the Bay of Fonseca. Alligators infest the waters. From the occasional specimens I saw off the unfrequented playas, I am convinced that this is the veritable reptile of the fresh-water rivers, whose wakeful eye, and grinning, horrid mouth, has been the target of so many thousand rifle-shots along the Mississippi. In Fonseca Bay they pass fearlessly among the boats at anchor at Amapala, and evidently go from salt water into the fresh bayous and swampy coasts of the continent without trouble. I was not easily convinced of the alligator frequenting the coast until one day, from a large lighter anchored a hundred yards from the shore, and to which, with a friend, I had swam while bathing, I observed a long log floating inshore from us. I drew the attention of my companion, and proposed to swim toward it, when he called out that it was an alligator. I did not believe it, however, and it soon drifted out of sight. We gained the beach, and not long afterward the log again made its appearance, when, a gun being brought from the warehouse, a charge of buckshot was fired at it. The water was at once violently agitated, and the alligator (for such it really was) plunged beneath the surface with a sweep of his tail, leaving no farther doubt as to his identity. Thereafter, our swimming excursions were confined to the immediate vicinity of the shore.

I was, at last, beginning to weary of Tigre Island. I had traveled its entire circumference, hunted over its length and breadth, examined its curiosities, and received my naturalization papers in full by passing through the ordeal of *calentura*, a certificate of which I carried in my yellow complexion and lustreless eyes. Its lions once seen, Robinson Crusoe never became more disgusted with Juan Fernandez than do the uninitiated with Tigre Island. I heard accounts of a cool, upland region thousands of feet above us, in the far interior, where the

coast fevers rarely if ever penetrate, and whose genial climate would restore the human to the pale cheek, and revive the energies shattered by the miasma and malaria of the damp lowlands. There was my goal; for that region I had left California; and though it was all-important to await the arrival of Don Carlos, yet the time seemed thrown away until I could reach at least Tegucigalpa, of whose fame I heard such accounts that I longed, as the countryman pines for his first glimpse of the shire town, to view this city of the mountains, the very name of which, until shortly before, I had never heard. At last a boat from the *embarcadero* of Choluteca made its appearance, and, casting anchor off the little town, its living freight was quickly landed, consisting of Señor Dardano and three daughters. Their journey had been an arduous and perilous one. Leaving New Orleans, they had been twenty-two days under sail to Omoa, on the Caribbean Sea, whence they had traveled by mule conveyance, *via* Comayagua and Tegucigalpa, across the continent. I was agreeably surprised to find three young ladies with the graces and accomplishments attendant upon a New York education, and conversing fluently in English, as well as in French, Italian, and Spanish. As soon as the fatigues of the journey had been met by the required repose, and the usual formal introductions gone through with, I presented my letters, and soon came to an understanding with my host.

On the following morning the island was in an uproar. The commandante of Amapala hoisted the national flag, and threw open his little grog-shop, of which business he has the monopoly in Tigre Island, and pays the supreme government thirty dollars per month for the license. A salute was fired from the door of the cuartel, and the Sardinian flag hoisted over the consular residence of Don Carlos. Old and young turned out, and flocked to the residence of the new-comers to offer congratulations and hear the news from the interior. A bullock, which had been tied to the sacrificial stake for a week past, awaiting the arrival of the party, was killed and distributed among the friends of the family, and by night the little town was in fine condition to sing or shout, as the case might be, the praises of Don Carlos. Fireworks and *vivas*, salvos of artillery and the popping of champagne corks, the twanging of guitars, and the merry con-

tra dance and waltz, whiled away the time until the small hours. Amapala has rarely seen a more convivial day since it sprung into existence in 1846, under the auspices of the patron whose fame the inhabitants were now celebrating. The merry-making at last came to an end, and after a few days of negotiation and arrangement, in which the bad English of Don Carlos was only equaled by my own bad Italian, the final polish was given to my formal Spanish letters of introduction to the *élite* of Tegucigalpa, including President Cabañas and the various government officials. The bongo was now prepared for La Brea, the port of Nacaome, bongo-men engaged and paid beforehand, "*adios*" reluctantly uttered to pretty faces, kind wishes expressed in good English, and on a warm, rainy evening, at six o'clock, behold me directing the conveyance of my baggage to the beach, where is anchored the time-honored launch of the famous Bachicha. I had repeatedly ordered Rafael, my faithful Olanchano, not to leave the baggage, but keep an eye through the darkness on the bongo-men. The *patron* had promised to be ready at eight o'clock; but that time passing, and mistrustful of the wretch, I sent Rafael to him to ascertain why he had not called for my trunks. His reply was that "bongo-men never put to sea in the rain." In truth, it was raining with tropical fury, and the night seemed most unpropitious for starting; but the final "*adios*" having been said, and all arranged for immediate departure, I was determined to start, if only for very spite, as I told the *patron*; but he only puffed his cigarrito the harder, and observed,

"*Es imposible, señor! no puedo salir!*"

He looked to me for the customary shrug and concernant reply, and was evidently prepared for the usual argument. The words were hardly uttered, however, before I had commenced pummeling him over the head with the apology for an umbrella which I still had with me. The effect was magical. The prescription was until then unheard of in Amapala. From the most apathetic, laziest dog on the island, my *patron* became suddenly imbued with an energy that astonished himself as well as me, and in an incredibly short space of time he had mustered his men, deposited my baggage in the bongo, taken his final drink at the cuartel, and, approaching me with a submissive air,

asked me to do him the favor to mount his shoulders and be carried through the water to the bongo. It was not impossible, after all; and, seeing that affairs were now in proper train, I coiled myself away in the little chosa and was soon asleep, despite the pouring rain and the blinding lightning, which flashed through the night among the inland mountains. It was yet dark when an unwonted rattling of oars awoke me from a feverish slumber. Springing up, I found we were far up a river or arm of Fonseca Bay known as the "Estero de la Brea." The headway already acquired by the bongo shot her toward the western bank, which, through the darkness and mist, seemed to me a second edition of Zempisque, and, if possible, even more desolate. We sprang ashore, still wet with the rains of the previous night.

A rough but spacious adobe hut, known here as the *aduanas*, or custom-house, stands nearest the water, and some dozen squalid cabins, scattered over an acre of ground, compose the town. A few half-naked wretches were crouching under the eaves of the custom-house, whose faint "Adios, señor!" only showed they were alive. My baggage was soon put ashore, and the bongo immediately left on her return trip to Tigre Island. With the departing splash of their oars the little town relapsed again into silence, undisturbed save by the scream of the night-owl, or the harsh voice of the bittern from the surrounding thicket. Rafael gathered my blankets, and made up an apology for a bed among the heavy-breathing squad under the eaves; but this delicate little attention was rendered nugatory by the keen scent of millions of sand-flies, who were not long in ascertaining the arrival of a thin-skinned Northerner among them. To sleep, or even lie still among such clouds of these pests, was out of the question; so, gun in hand, I took a well-beaten cattle-path leading toward a neighboring wood-crowned hill, and, half unconsciously, found myself wandering into a darkened solitude, where the humming of insects and the monotonous croak of the tree-toad were the only sounds. Alone, and gazing half dreamily into the "glimmering landscape," that lost itself below and beyond the night shades, I began to realize the true nature of the task I had undertaken. With the departure of the bongo, the chain of communication with Nicaragua and California seemed effectually cut off.



I was now on the main land, with the continent before and above me; its rugged cordillera, dividing the two oceans, dimly defined against the gray dawn, had yet to be crossed and descended toward the Atlantic slope, and important privileges to be obtained, upon which depended the hopes of far-distant and expectant friends. Between me and the goal I aimed at, probably not five persons could be found understanding a word of English; and although the interior is the most populous and civilized portion of the state, I seemed to be entering a *terra incognita*, the mysterious character of which increased the deeper it was penetrated. Aurora had cast her rosy tints along the horizon. The lowing of cattle, barking of dogs, and incessant scolding of countless parrots flitting among the woods, imparted a livelier air to the hitherto sombre prospect, and, stepping down to the nearest rill, I performed my morning ablutions, after which I re-entered the miserable little hamlet cheerful and happy. Rafael had already missed me, and gazed with stupid wonder when I answered to his inquiries that I had been hunting. While he was saddling some mules which I had succeeded in hiring for the trip to Nacaome at four dollars each, I entered the nearest hut, and with a *real* purchased a large wooden bowl of milk, warm from the cow, which, with the biscuit we had brought from Amapala, made a palatable breakfast. At seven o'clock we were mounted and making our way over a level and apparently very fertile country, intersected with numerous small streams discharging into the bay. The freshness of the early morning air continued until about nine o'clock, when the heat became almost intolerable. Even the feathered tribe seemed to have fled to the thickest groves to escape it. With such a temperature in October, it occurred to me that in the hottest months the Pacific coast of Honduras must be a species of Pandemonium, unfit for human habitation. Half way on our route to Nacaome we passed the hacienda of *Agua Caliente*, so named from a hot sulphurous spring taking its rise in the vicinity. This is the property of Señor Mariano Valle, who is counted one of the wealthiest cattle-owners in the Department of Choluteca.

The road was here defined by the first stone wall I had seen in the country, along the crest of which dozens of hideous igua-



THE IGUANA.

nas were squatted flat upon the stones, regarding us with a fixed stare as we passed. Ugly as they appear, they are harmless, and the females are considered palatable food by the natives. The woods through which we rode were composed of robles, guanacastes, a few mahogany trees, guapinoles, mangroves, and an infinity of acacias, and nameless thorns and bright-leaved trees, whose beauties the eye could never weary of contemplating. Under the shade of the largest were herds of fat cattle, all branded similarly to those of California, and apparently with the same quaint *fiarros*. At ten o'clock we arrived at Nacaome, the principal town of this department. My Nicaraguan and Amapalan friends had kindly furnished me with letters of introduction to several leading residents, without which my reception might possibly have been less cordial. We trotted into the Plaza, and rode to the adobe hut of a little deformed Frenchman, named Caret, who, in a paroxysm of hospitality at Amapala, had given me a letter of introduction to his wife, recommending me, he said, to her special hospitality and regard. I had cherished this letter with particular care, and delivered it at the door with as much grace as I could assume for the occasion. The reception was enthusiastic, and I was requested to dismount and call the house my own. Eight days did I reside at the hospitable house of Monsieur Caret, regaling his screeching brats with confectionery, and on my departure for the interior the hostess charged me three times the usual price, having counted on my wealth by the profuseness of my liberality. On my

remonstrating, and referring to the letter of Monsieur, recommending me to reside at the house,

“Oh!” said she; “here, you may see the letter, if you wish.”

It actually spoke of my lengthy purse and the liberality of its owner! Considering that I had eaten nothing but a few biscuit, had slept in my own hammock, and had, moreover, been obliged to hire an extra mule at La Brea to transport a number of boxes the hideous little wretch had politely intrusted to my charge on leaving Amapala, I left the casa of Monsieur Caret with the reflection that here was the first instance in Central America where an attempt had been made to cheat me.

My arrival in Nacaome was the signal for half a dozen youngsters, in a state of nature, to cluster round the door and venture remarks upon my appearance. Swinging in my hammock, which Rafael had slung for me in the corridor, I enjoyed the gentle breeze that swept through the thick crush of leaves around the town. At noon the heat was almost unbearable, but toward evening I ventured out, and, armed with a package of introductory letters, visited several families, among whom were those of Señor Ledo Matute, Señor Jose Maria Rugame, formerly Minister of Finance under Lindo, and General Manuel Escobar, Commandante Militar of the Department of Choluteca. This latter gentleman had already received letters from Castellon at Leon, advising him of my arrival, and requesting him to extend every facility to my enterprise. He handed me a bundle of letters from Castellon, which had been awaiting my arrival, introducing me favorably to Cabañas, and other distinguished public men in Honduras. Nacaome contains about three thousand inhabitants, among whom are several families celebrated, in this country of indiscriminate amalgamation, for the extreme purity of their Castilian descent. Some of the women are pretty, and extremely white, but with the listless, sallow, waxy look always marking the resident of tropical lowlands. Fevers are prevalent and fatal here in the hot months, and the situation of the place in relation to the adjacent foothills and spurs of the Cordilleras make it one of the hottest and most unpleasant on the coast—much more so than the town of Choluteca, which is higher, and more open to the effects of the



breeze. It stands in an amphitheatre of hills, in the stifling atmosphere of which the foreigner gasps for breath. Here were the usual dirty little cuartel and handful of fever-stricken soldiers, whose negro drummer made the circuit of the Plaza three times a day, denoting with his noisy instrument that the place was under martial law. General Escobar took me to see a review of the troops the day after my arrival. He attached a great value to the opinion of a *Norte Americano*, and hoped I would represent, on my return home, the perfection of drill I witnessed. It was actually a poor farce, and reminded me of my school-boy days of "playing soldier." But, with efficient leaders and good arms, these fellows fight with a courage hardly to be expected from their outward appearance.

I had not been long in town when the news of my enterprise to "buy the country" had spread far and near. Among my many visitors was an old Salvadoreno, by name Don Lucas Resuleo, who, after introducing himself, said he had been expatriated by the Servile party for the leading part he had taken in the Liberal cause after the expulsion of Morazan. He was extremely anxious to know the object of my visit to Honduras, having read the "puff" adroitly inserted by my friend Chico Dias in the *Nueva Era* of Leon; but, my account not satisfying him, he offered me his snuff-box, and complimented me by saying how happy I ought to be in counting myself the countryman of Washington. On the following morning I was aroused from my hammock by the servant of Don Lucas, bearing a written invitation from his master to take coffee with him. As this is the excess of politeness in Honduras, and a ready-saddled mule stood at the door awaiting my movements, I could not refuse. The result of my visit was a present from the old Don of complete files of several old Guatemalan and Honduras newspapers, illustrated with the writings of Valle, Barrundia, Cacho, and Marure, comprising the best history of Central America to be obtained since the Independence.

Two hours' conversation with the old politician placed me in possession of many additional facts of great value. But the principal object of his attentions to me was to obtain my opinion regarding some specimens of coal, or a crocky substance resembling it, which he said came from his mine near the mouth



of the Goascoran River, emptying into the Bay of Fonseca. The pieces somewhat resembled English cannel coal, without its glossy appearance. I was at a loss to determine whether it was stone or coal; if the latter, it must have contained a considerable portion of foreign matter. A specimen which I saw burning left a mass of clinker, and emitted a small, feeble flame. Don Lucas had already carried his shaft to a depth of three varas (that being prescribed by the mining laws of the country to insure possession), and, although laughed at as a crazy fool by his less industrious neighbors, he felt quite sure of eventually realizing a fortune. I could not repress a smile at the breathless attention the old man gave to my opinion, rendered, perhaps, a trifle too favorable. He evidently considered a word from a foreigner worth more than volumes of praise, or the reverse, from one of his own countrymen. He professed to have a paper, signed by Mr. E. G. Squier, to the effect that good coal could be found along the banks of the Goascoran, and desired me to add my own; but, having never seen that section of the state, I was unable to do so. We finally compromised matters by my exchanging signatures with him—an act of extreme friendship in Central America. Coal undoubtedly exists on the Pacific slope of Honduras and San Salvador, but, like most of that found within the tropics, it lacks the weight and consistency of the northern article. Of the advantages to accrue from the establishment of a coal dépôt at Amapala, to be supplied from these mines, capitalists are already aware from other sources.

I had arranged at Amapala with a nephew of General Cabañas, who was on his way to Tegucigalpa, to meet me at Nacaome, and, anxious to secure his company in this my first journey in the country, I waited a number of days for his arrival. During this sojourn I had ample time to arrange my plans for the future, as well as to observe the little world around me. At early dawn I walked to the banks of the river and plunged into its pure waters, sparkling merrily along beneath a blue sky and among the greenish foliage; thence returning, I found a cup of chocolate or coffee awaiting me, which dispatched, and a couple of *cigarros* whiffed into smoke in the luxurious hammock, I donned my broad-brimmed hat and sallied out in quest

of novelties, and to return some of the numerous visits made me by the kind-hearted but inquisitive inhabitants. At ten o'clock the streets were generally deserted save by a score or two of donkeys, hogs, and dogs, who seemed the only specimens of animated life capable of resisting the burning sun. Here, as in all other Central American places, the dogs enjoy the freedom of the town. Numbers of these lanky creatures, covered with sores and fleas, entered the house on the first two days, and ensconced themselves around my hammock, from whence neither the loud "perro!" of the señora nor the scolding of the other women could dislodge them. The agony of flea-bites soon convinced me that either I or the dogs must quit the house. Arming myself with a club, I declared war, and opened on the offensive at once, to the wonder and fear of the señora, who from childhood had regarded the dogs as a necessary and unavoidable evil. From my hammock I left my mark on every gay Lothario of a cur in the street, who at length, finding their ancient privileges about to be disputed, watched for my coming, and avoided me like a pestilence. When tired of this amusement I usually resigned the club to Rafael, who stood patiently at the door, like another Cerberus, ready to "slam" his weapon upon the heads of all canine intruders.

I was reposing as usual one sultry afternoon, watching the clouds sweeping past the distant mountain peaks, when a servant from the house of Señor Rugame rode up to the door of my little residence, and, quickly dismounting, desired me to ride to the house of his master, whose little daughter was grievously ill. Every foreigner is supposed in Central America to be a doctor, and, should the traveler once succeed in effecting some fortunate hap-hazard cure, his reputation is thenceforth made. He is sought from all quarters, and his skill even demanded in cases where a failure might destroy the hopes of expectant parents and family friends. To refuse is almost an impossibility; and where the whole family join in the request, backed by a handsomely-saddled horse awaiting your movements at the door, you risk the forfeiture of every body's good-will by withholding what little medical skill you may possess. On this occasion, therefore, I hastened to the house of the old Don, where the mother was anxiously awaiting my arrival. The silent sus-

pense with which the señora watched my face as I felt the pulse of the delirious little sufferer went quite to my heart. Prescribe I must, despite my assertions that I was no physician. They only regarded this as a proof of my modesty and real ability. So, applying to a small box of medicines prepared for me in California, I administered my remedies, inwardly praying they might be of use, and knowing they were at least harmless. My directions were followed to the letter, and on the following day, to my gratification and surprise, the fever had vanished, and before my departure the patient nearly recovered. My reputation henceforth preceded me in all my travels. I was *un medico muy grande* in disguise, and the oftener I denied it the more convinced were they of the fact. Not long afterward, the Señora Caret was taken ill while I was absent in another part of the town. "Doctor Don Guillermo" was sent for with all dispatch. A general commotion in the household announced my return, and I was ushered into the presence of the *inferma* with due formality. I do not choose to state what my remedies were, but the precipitancy with which Doña Merced swallowed them manifested a confidence in the prescriber which older practitioners might have sighed for in vain. The patient recovered, and I, unlike Dr. Sangrado, have not to answer hereafter for my malpractice.

Nacaome is the scene of one or two sharp revolutionary conflicts, and here Cabañas lost some of his bravest officers. The climate of the place and its vicinity is abhorred by foreigners. Even the natives do not long survive the hot, damp atmosphere. The summer heat of the place has become proverbial.

On the seventh day after my arrival, when I had resolved to start alone, my friend T—— arrived from San Miguel by land, when we made instant preparations for departure. The señora prepared her best breakfast, and mules were brought from a neighboring hacienda. General Escobar and suite called upon us with another bundle of introductory letters, which he said would place the best houses in Tegucigalpa at my disposal. At night I was awakened by a villainous twanging of catgut and a melancholy wailing of voices outside the door. It was a serenade to "Dr. Don Guillermo." The music consisted of an oft-repeated strain from four voices, the performers increasing

in rapidity and noise toward the last line of each verse, when the whole party uttered a loud yell; then succeeded a guitar interlude, and the next verse was rendered. Several dogs, and a mad bull chained to a stake in an adjoining yard, added their voices to the din. A maniac living opposite opened his door, and assisted with imitations of a man being strangled. At last a pattering of rain-drops drove the serenaders to their homes, and soon the little town subsided into its wonted silence. I learned on the following morning that the musical party had been engaged at a christening, and, not a little proud of their abilities, had determined to give a proof of them to the stranger.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

Crossing the Moromulca and Nacaome.—Sierra Traveling in Central America.—Advice to Travelers.—Mules.—Saddles.—Hiring Servants.—Pleasures of the Journey.—Bathing Places.—“Cubiertos.”—How to please Don Fulano.—The Plain of Nacaome.—A Cascade.—A Look back.—Pespire.—An obliging Alcalde.—A Bevy of Beauties.—*Oracion*.—“*No hay para vender!*”—Swimming Match with the Belles of Pespire.—“*Adios!*”—Natural Productions.—Some of the wild Birds.

ALTHOUGH every thing had apparently been arranged for our departure, it was past nine o'clock on the following morning when, bidding adieu to our Nacaome friends, and preceded by our two servants, an *ariero*, and the pack-mules, we left the town, and turned toward the lofty tumble of mountains rising in gray and solemn grandeur before us. Our course was nearly north, toward the ferry across the Moromulca and Nacaome rivers, which, joining within a mile of the town, form a considerable stream, discharging into the Bay of Fonseca near La Brea. The rains of the previous night had swollen the waters into rapid whirlpools, forming at the junction a boiling mass of foam, whose yeasty billows rendered a passage in the crazy old bongo a matter of doubt, if not of danger. Even the government courier, who is supposed to stop at no impediment, refused to cross toward us, and the Charon of the place advised us to await the subsidence of the waters. I left the case for T—— to decide, who at once voted for crossing. The river is here about two hundred yards in width. A number of boys were swimming near



the shore, who plunged fearlessly about, diving and reappearing in funny contrast with the white-capped seas, their shiny forms glistening like porpoises in the sunlight. The bongo was a mere dug-out, but we crowded into it, baggage and all, and leaving the mules to the care of our servants, pulled out into the stream. We poled along the opposite side for several hundred yards before entering the foaming current of the Nacaome. After half an hour's tugging at the roots and overhanging branches, we reached a point about two hundred yards above the landing. The rowers now seated themselves and adjusted the paddles for a heavy tug, when, all being ready, the foremost one gave as the signal, "*Hoo-pah !*" The boat glided out into the hissing torrent, and darted down with the tide like an arrow. The water entered from both sides ; the men sprang to their work like demons, but, despite their efforts, the frail craft was twirled in the current as in a whirlpool. We drifted helplessly toward a series of rapids below, amid which destruction seemed inevitable ; and, in fact, we were quite within their influence, when a lucky eddy sent us, as if shot from a gun, into a pile of drift-wood, whence we gradually reached the shore, completely wet, and with the satisfaction of seeing every article in the boat swimming in water. The mules crossed at a point below, their heads just visible above the water, and snorting like hogs with the unusual exertion. To be wet through, either in showers or in bongo navigation, had now become a matter of course consequent upon traveling in the rainy season ; so, without attempting to change our clothes, we saddled and started for Pespire, a distance of five leagues, inwardly congratulating ourselves on the escape from drowning, which, according to T——, had been a narrow one. My companion took these little incidents with stoical indifference, believing that, as he had passed unscathed the thousand and one revolutions of the country, he had an equal chance of safety in his sierra journeying.

Mountain travel, as done in the interior of the Central American states, is in many respects like that of the Andes. The *camino real*, or public highway, is a mere mule-path over the mountains. The only road (made or improved) in the country is that of the Transit Company in Nicaragua, connecting San Juan and Virgin Bay. The great plain of Leon has natural

roads, which are level and good in summer, though dusty. These could be improved with little expense, but there lacks the public spirit to undertake any such enterprise. From the *camino real* in Honduras there are occasionally lateral paths among the trees leading to various small towns, varying in population from five to eight hundred. These are scattered along the country at distances of about ten leagues, and it is rarely the traveler can not "make" a town at the end of his day's journey.

Provisions, such as dried beef, cheese, *chichi*, aguardiente, *tiste*, sometimes venison, chickens, eggs, milk, *tortillas*, *salchichas*, and rice and beans, may be purchased at these villages, and at the small haciendas during the seasons of plenty; but for the last four years, what with the locusts and the wars, there is scarcely enough to support the inhabitants, and the wayfarer must often turn supperless into his hammock, with scarcely a better prospect for the morrow.

But the mountain traveling is jolly work, after all, if you have a pleasant companion, a reasonably honest servant, and the constitution to enjoy the rare and strange scenery ever opening to the view. You spring from your hammock at daylight, while the air is yet vocal with the song of birds; for, to make a good day's journey, you must start before sunrise, and retire during the noonday heat into the shade of the nearest woods, where some clear water-course affords your servant the means of preparing your *tiste* or *café* while, swinging in your hammock between two flower-capped trees, you enjoy the delicious coolness; or, if you appreciate the luxury of a bath after your dusty struggle, you ensconce yourself under the silvery spray of some tiny waterfall, whence you emerge refreshed and ready for the road.

You must expect every inconvenience and painful privation; and since these regions, as they become known to the world, are doubtless destined to be crossed by many Americans, it is perhaps well to go prepared for any and every emergency. Out of the viands above enumerated, the traveler, if used to Central American life, may make a tolerably good meal; but if he is "up" to the country, he will not neglect to provide himself with spoon, knife, and fork, salt and pepper, packed in some convenient traveling-case made for the purpose; several pounds of burnt

and ground coffee; an equal quantity of sugar, if he has not learned to do without it; a few pickles, and a small iron affair which must answer the purposes of kettle, stew-pan, coffee-pot, and punch-bowl. Let him not forget the *eslabon*, *apagador*, and *piedra chispa*, the universally-used flint and tinder-box of the country; and with a good supply of native tobacco, which is really excellent, the stranger may laugh at famine, and pass comfortably and tranquilly through any part of Honduras, always receiving a "*buenos dias!*" from the natives, and a gay smile from the chocolate-colored *muchachas* in reply to some rustic gallantry in the shape of compliment or passing joke.

The Spanish-American resorts to *finesse* and flattery to accomplish his ends, especially toward strangers. You must therefore take Don Fulano on the weak side, and fight him with his own weapons. His love of country is not less a fixed fact than that attributed to the American. To him the bald mountain peaks and blue skies, the profuse verdure of the lowlands, or the stunted vegetation of the sierras, are as dear as the cherished institutions of our own land are to us. Though *soft soldier* and flattery are his most usual means of success, he is not invulnerable himself to the same weapons. You must therefore praise his country, wonder at the scenery, compliment the señoritas, and join in their jokes. He who can travel a year in Honduras without being constantly amused must be incapable of appreciating the ludicrous in a thousand incidents and scenes. In a word, a man, with a good constitution to bear up against privations and occasional mishaps, a clear conscience, and the zest to enjoy life in an entirely new and picturesque garb, may laugh his way across the continent, and ever afterward refer to his trip with pleasing recollections.

In a journey over the *Cordilleras*, all the articles are carried by the servant, who takes charge of the pack-mules, and generally precedes you half a mile on the road. Should the traveler have baggage, an extra mule must be hired, always remembering that it is easier to pack two trunks than one, as the art of packing a mule consists in placing the load so as to preserve its equilibrium on the animal's back. No hotels or inns open their friendly doors along the route, and in the villages a stranger is regarded with a suspicious awe, which in war-time leaves

you to suppose yourself taken for some spy of the enemy, or "el ministro," the title now conceded to almost every well-dressed traveler with a foreign dash in his accent.

A servant is indispensable, and can be readily obtained at any of the coast towns for \$5 (*duros*) per month. In the interior they have yet to become acquainted with the wants of foreigners. A good traveling servant is up by four o'clock in the morning (if on the road), and awakes his *patron* at a given hour, presenting him at the same time with a cup of hot coffee or *cacao*. This you sip at your leisure by candle-light, swinging in your hammock, and varying the entertainments with short whiffs at the "digestive pipe." Meanwhile Pedro or Manuel packs and saddles the animals. When all is prepared, you buckle on your spurs, and, having seen the *mozos* start, you mount and amble along without troubling yourself regarding the baggage. Any scientific instruments which you may have must be ever under your own eye, as Manuel is as likely as not to use your barometer to beat his mule, or your sextant-case for a *frijole* dish.

Mules are to Honduras what the camel is to Arabia. Without this patient and hardy creature there would be no means of transporting goods across the sierras. The *mula*, or she-mule, is considered much more valuable than the *macho*. She is taught an easy ambling, *rack*, not known out of Spanish America, and more resembling a very rapid walk than any other gait I can think of. The animal thus broken is called an *andadora*, and gets over an astonishing amount of country in a day. They are seldom used for cargo, are well kept, and valued from \$60 to \$250. The common price of good mules is about \$30 in silver. It is generally preferable for the traveler to purchase at once on entering the country, even if he pays a larger price, as he is often detained seeking for animals *para alquilar*, which is always attended with annoying circumstances. Don Fulano, with whom you have bargained, starts off to see Don Somebody else about it, and it is a chance if he does not stop on the way and forget his errand, leaving you to fret or philosophize, as may best please you. The first lesson for the foreigner to learn in Central America is to "take no note of time," which is a commodity without value to the Spaniard. The idea of hurrying is regarded as an



evidence of a weak head and frivolous character. "*Pronto*" is often heard, but seldom put in practice. Owning your own mules, you may start at any hour, and there is little danger of losing them by theft. Besides, the expenses of hiring from town to town at last exceed their original cost, to say nothing of the chance of getting hard-trotting brutes thrust upon you as an ignorant stranger.

The saddle of the country is at best a poor apology, and let no one deceive himself by going to Central America with the expectation of procuring one. The only saddles that a stranger can use are those imported from Mexico, all the rest being rough, ill-shaped affairs known as *albardos*. The Mexican or curb bit should also be carried to the country, the snaffle being inapplicable to the mule. Two pairs of covered leathern saddle-bags are also indispensable, as the *alforjas*, or open-work sacks of *pita* are not water-proof. Pistols I found of little use after landing in Honduras. Except in times of revolution or public disturbance, the country is as safe to travel through as the interior of New York. It is better, however, to have arms carried in leathern holsters. But the weight of a heavy Colt's revolver is enough to destroy the pleasure of traveling in any country. My rifle, which I never allowed beyond my sight, proved a useless incumbrance, except to take an occasional crack at a staring iguana, or to bring some bounding deer to an abrupt halt. In the rainy season a white India-rubber coat will be found serviceable, and few travel without an umbrella, but rather as a protection against the sun than the rain. The horses are small, but very strong, and are descendants of the old Spanish stock. They are seldom used for long distances, the mule being preferred for its powers of endurance. I have devoted, perhaps, an undue space to the description of sierra traveling, but excuse it to myself under the idea that some future wayfarer may find it advantageous.

After leaving the ferry of the Nacaome, we followed a well-beaten track leading over the undulating foot-hills of the mountain regions we were approaching. The surface of the country gradually changed. After two leagues we began to rise more rapidly, and found ourselves pursuing a mountain path known as the public road, with evidences of having once been im-

proved. We crossed several small streams falling into the Nacaome. Some of these tumbled in cascades from the rocks, or ran over level, pebbly bottoms. One, at the foot of a conical hill, looked so inviting that we stopped, and, preparing our hooks, let them down into the deepest and stillest pools, where trout ought to frequent; but our most tempting inducements were without avail.

The *arieros* having gone on before, we remounted, and overtook them and the pack-mules at the top of a ridge in a dense thicket, the silence only disturbed by a distant roar like that of a New England forest. Indeed, the scenery in many places reminded me of that of some of the Eastern and Middle States. The roaring we imagined to come from the trees in the wind, until a sudden turn in the path gave us a glimpse of a branch of the Nacaome dashing bravely over a precipice, and scattering abroad its waters in the form of a fountain. We looked down some hundreds of feet, the voice of the cataract echoing among the surrounding hills. This, as well as the other streams we had passed, was enlarged by the recent rains. The course of nearly all of them was southwest, and falling into the Nacaome.

The ground in every direction showed indications of minerals. Valuable opals are said to exist in these ravines, but all I afterward saw were procured from the Department of Gracias, in Eastern Honduras. From the rising ground over which we passed we caught frequent glances of the leafy plain we were leaving. The afternoon sun poured full upon the varied shades of green, seeming to blink in the intense heat. Leagues beyond, the blue ocean spread away from Fonseca Bay, and the line of volcanoes, stretching from San Salvador into Nicaragua, stood like sentinels overlooking the teeming plains beneath. A thousand rare plants and trees stood trembling in the fierce sunlight. Here we noted, as we passed, the allspice, the tamarind, acacia, bamboo, mahogany, silk-cotton-tree, ebony, oak, cactus, *copalchí*, wild *jocote*, lobelia, wild lime, mastic, *sapote*, and dozens of others, uncared-for and unclaimed, budding, leafing, and dispensing their fruits, year after year, in the silence of the tropical forest.

Toward evening we began to descend a steep hill-side to the

plain of Pespire. At the foot we again encountered the Nacaome, but the ford was covered, and the river raged among the impeding rocks with an increased force from the rains of yesternight. Some people on the opposite shore shouted and motioned to us, but the voices were lost in the roar of the waters. We now understood them to be impassable; but, having already formed an estimate of Central American impossibilities, we entered at where the ford seemed to be, and passed over without difficulty, though the boiling and hissing of the torrent made us half repent our rashness before we reached the shallow water of the Pespire shore.

A few naked urchins scampered in advance of our train to show the way, and in a few minutes ushered us into the little town with shouts of

“*Mira! mira! aqui viene el Americano!*”

As we entered the *Plaza* we met the alcalde, known by the cane of office. He returned our salutations with a low bow, and bid us welcome.

“Although,” said he, “I am obliged by law to inquire into the business of all strangers during the present disturbances with Guatemala, your countenances are your best passports. Go with God!”

With this flattering introduction to Pespire, we exchanged “*adios*” with the friendly alcalde, and made our way to a small street, one side of which was formed by the adobe wall of the church of Santa Ursula, and pulled up at the door of la Señora Urmaneta. No sooner had we alighted than we were surrounded by an inquisitive crowd, most of them quick-eyed girls, who from time to time uttered low and rapid comments on our appearance and trappings. One of them, informed by the ragged troop who had preceded us, remarked,

“*Todos los Americanos siempre traen rifles por el camino.*”

As she said this with rather a disdainful glance at the care I bestowed on my weapon (the last gift of “Natchez” in San Francisco), I replied in Spanish, with some compliment to the rural critic, when, with a loud scream, the group took to their heels, laughing, and repeating,

“*Habla Español! habla Español!*” little counting, when

they commenced their comments, on our being able to comprehend them.

The beasts resigned to the care of the servants, we entered the house just as the solemn church bell announced the hour of *oracion*. For a moment all was silent in the town. This beautiful custom is not observed in Honduras with the reverence shown to it in Nicaragua, where many kneel, and nearly all lift their hats. Here only a moment's respectful silence showed the general recognition of the custom.

As we had been forewarned, nothing can be bought on the road for copper. "*No hay, señor,*" was the response to all demands for food. The landlady made the same reply until T—— exhibited some *silver reals*, when the old dame's memory seemed suddenly refreshed, and we shortly sat down to a supper of hard-boiled eggs, chickens, and *frijoles*, to which we added, from our own stock of provisions, coffee, ship-bread, and a final *bonne bouche* of a glassful of French brandy. Pespire is the connecting link in the traffic between the mountain city of Tegucigalpa and the ports of Amapala and La Union. Here are the head-quarters of mules, and a lively trade is maintained between Comayagua to the northwest, Tegucigalpa to the northeast, and Choluteca to the eastward—three centres of trade for their respective sections of Honduras. It has about two thousand inhabitants. The streets, which are neatly paved with the smooth stones of the river, are regularly laid out. A neat church, cabilda, and rector's residence, all of adobe, are the only buildings to be distinguished from the mass of red-tiled roofs, from among which tall palms and a variety of fruit-trees rear themselves with a pleasing and picturesque effect. At sunset we strolled into the *Plaza* to buy some bundles of *sacate* for the mules, and then entering our respective hide beds, to the hardness of which our aching bones attested in the morning, we disputed possession with the fleas until daylight.

With the dawn we walked forth, and, after dispatching the boys to the *potrero* for the mules, stripped and plunged into the river, to allay the feverish heat caused by the irritations of the night. All the water used in Pespire is taken in earthen jars on the heads of female water-bearers. We had scarcely left the river when troops of these *aguadoras*, straight and well formed,



walked down to the bank, and, after filling their jars, imitated our example, and followed the immemorial custom in the tropics of a morning bath. Some of them swam fearlessly into the middle of the torrent, and splashed about in the foam like Naiads. As they evinced an utter unconcern at our proximity, we took to ourselves the credit of not being the aggressors, and were, consequently, in no fear of the fate of peeping Tom of Coventry. They made the woods echo with their wild laughter, and even amused themselves at our expense as we walked away. I told T—— that this was an instance of natural simplicity of manner such as I had rarely witnessed. “Oh no,” said he, with a laugh; “this is common; you must get used to our Honduras ways.” I then recalled my bathing experience in Nicaragua, and voted the Central Americans the most unsophisticated race in existence.

At seven o'clock we left town, having partaken of *café con leche*, and took the road, after bidding adieu to the obsequious alcalde, and replying with unction to the “*adios, Americano*” of the juvenile population. From the little adobe outskirts of Pespire we entered a valley leading upward toward the sierras. The path was intersected with gullies and streams swollen by the late rains. From the occasional ridges of metallic rock, we gazed inland toward ominous-looking peaks and forested hills, over which, from their easterly bearing, it was evident we must pass; but our mules were fresh and strong, and we stretched onward with full confidence. My servant here pointed out the *almastiga*, or mastic-tree, growing in small clusters along the slopes of the hills. This drug, found in several localities in Central America, is obtained by making incisions in the trees; but as yet, few attempts have been made to procure it except in Guatemala. No exportations, either from Honduras or Nicaragua, have ever been made. The cactus, in numerous and beautiful varieties, showed itself along the route, sometimes perched jauntily on the peak of a bold rock, and at others snugly ensconced in the niches of the granite walls that bordered our path. Some were scarlet, but the greater number were of a rich yellow, and resembled marigolds when viewed from a distance.

A variety of beautiful birds flitted past, but few of them were

songsters. The names of some of these have probably never been published. Many familiar to Americans are found in the woods of the foot-hills of the sierras, and differ little from the same species at the north. Here may be seen the sparrowhawk; the *muchuelo*, or horn-owl; the white, blue, purple, and gray heron; the crow and blackbird; the *ruiseñor*, or nightingale; the *verderon*, or greenbird; and the *pichon*, or blue dove, somewhat resembling our domestic pigeon, the male sporting a pretty indigo back and purple breast. He is generally seen alone on some gnarled limb, and answering with his ventriloquous note his distant companion. The *pica madera*, or Central American woodpecker, may sometimes be heard in the dark everglades hammering busily at his store-house, the decayed tree. There is also the redbird, with his beautiful topknot; the swallow-tail (*el tijiros*); the *cola larga*, or long-tail, and twice as many more, counting from the gorgeous *jurraca* to the gilded humming-bird, of which the forests are full, and of more hues and descriptions than would find a reasonably industrious ornithologist employment for a year.

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## CHAPTER IX.

Note-taking.—Sugar-loaf Mountain.—Cinnabar.—Foliage.—Mountain Scenery.—Mansanita.—A dizzy Precipice.—La Venta.—The Alcalde.—“El Ministro Americano!”—Famine among the Villagers.—Padre Ramirez’s Ideas of Protestantism.—How to get a Dinner.—Plantains.—View from the Cordilleras.—Savanna Grande.—Padre Domingo.—Hacienda de Trinidad.—Wedding in the Mountains.—An Adventure.—Meeting a Bridal Party.—Lost in the Sierra.—A midnight Storm.—Nueva Arcadia.—Pine Forests.—Cerro de Ule.—Another Adventure.—Fording el Rio Grande.—Ahorcadores.—Approach to Tegucigalpa.—The City.—First Impressions.

ON entering for the first time the shadows of a Central American forest, the stranger is possessed with a mania to take notes of every thing he sees, hears, feels, and smells; but, finding a mass of evidence accumulating he had little counted on at the outset, he gradually relaxes his vigilance, inclining to depend on memory in his future travels. From such a collection it afterward becomes difficult to select in “lots to suit” readers, and the fact left out as frivolous to one might prove of the utmost

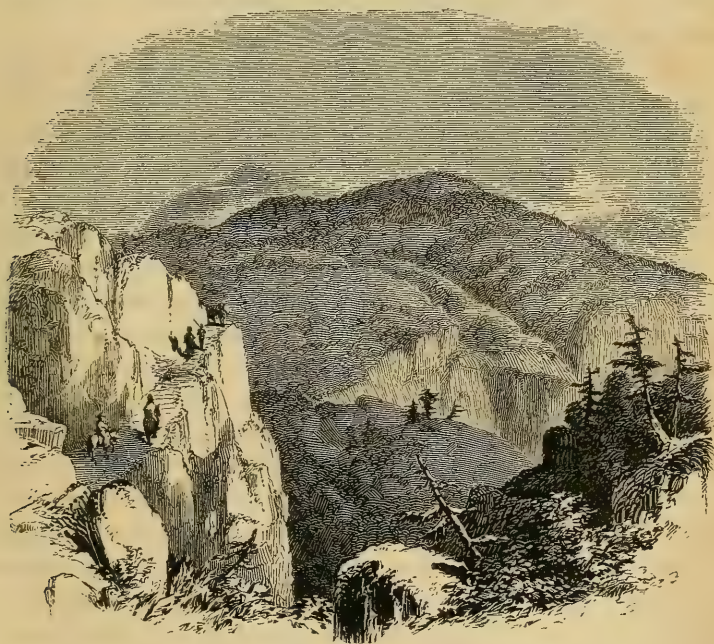
importance to another. Thus an ornithologist would wonder at the stupidity which, among such a profusion of bright-winged birds, could have failed to note the habits and plumage of each, and a similar remark might be made by the professor of every branch of science. But the time spent in such researches would defeat the objects of any but a scientific, and, consequently, slower-paced expedition. A rush through the country on mule-back affords but limited opportunities for minute investigation, or to record notes amid the vexations of a painful trip, in which, instead of a corps of *savans*, one unassisted and incompetent wayfarer must make and commit to the pass-book *every thing* of interest. Nobody in Central America can understand the object of your questions, and the general reply to all is the universal "*por supuesto*," "of course." It sometimes takes an hour's adroit questioning, and a world of patience, to ascertain one simple fact—such, for instance, as to the season of planting the *yuca*, or the depth of a river at a stated season. Woe to the interrogator should he lose his patience, or show the least petulance at the slow-moulded responses to his queries. He is then regarded as a weak-minded *fidget*, and decidedly an undignified personage.

We left the little valley and mounted the foot-hills, sparkling here and there with sulphurets, and evidences protruding in various places of iron and copper ores. Spaces of country occasionally opened which seemed fertile, from the snugly-thatched huts, half-embowered in waving corn, and the *platinal* rustling its leafy wealth in the breeze. I had long since abandoned my plan of noting each small stream flowing toward the ocean. Among the prominent landmarks I noted a leaning sugar-loaf mountain, which peered aloft, conspicuous above the surrounding peaks. At a distance it resembled a battered castle turret; but, on passing it toward evening, we found it covered with a remarkable red stone, which our guide asserted was cinnabar, proved to be such by a German traveling chemist who had wandered through here many years since.

At noon we struck off from the road, and the boys, now worked into practice, were speedily engaged making coffee. Our height was eighteen hundred feet above the sea. No pine or fir trees had yet been seen on the route. The formations were gen-



erally of sandstone, disintegrated quartz and granite. The temperature was  $86^{\circ}$  Fahr. From our stopping-place we gazed back upon the mountain ridges through which our journey had led us. A better mountaineer than myself would have been puzzled to point out the route leading from the flowery plains of Choluteca into the more temperate climate we were now enjoying. Above us, against the eastern sky, we saw plainly the line of pines which we would reach during the ensuing day. Far to the westward, the volcanic peaks of El Tigre, Sacate Grande, Conchagua, and San Miguel loomed blue and dim against the misty horizon, beneath which I vainly endeavored to distinguish the ocean. The steep ascent, up which the trail still



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extended, showed the path, carved out of the white sandstone by the mules' feet, winding like the sinuosities of a great serpent.

The pass from this point, which is called *El Diablo*, is reckoned one of the most dangerous in the sierra. It forms, however, the principal route to the interior. Huge peaks and jut-



ting cliffs of gray granite tower against the sky. The trees of smaller growth, widely separated, and bending away from the force of the prevailing winds, stood in scattered squadrons along the less precipitous slopes.

Forming a prominent feature in the scanty foliage, the *manzanita*, with its red, gnarled, and crooked trunk leaning awkwardly from the perpendicular, thrust itself from among the rocks and shallow, clayey soil, which seemed scarcely capable of sustaining it. The tree or bush is hardly above ten feet in height. Its branches and twigs are coated with a delicate layer of white, pollen-like substance, which easily brushes off. The leaves are alternate, oval, veined, of a light green on the upper surface, but a shade paler beneath. It bears a very small white and pink flower.

Close to our encampment was a precipice, down which we gazed a sheer descent of several hundred feet, the bald rock scarcely offering a notch upon which to rest the foot. Here I amused myself in dislocating the heaviest stones, and watching their descent, until the sound of their rattling was lost in the murmur of the woods below. The lengthening shadows at last warned us to remount, and struggle onward and upward.

From here our road was a gradual ascent, at times winding along precipices on whose brow a narrow shelf protruded, barely leaving room for a loaded mule to pass with safety. Though this is denominated the *camino real*, or highway, we saw no sign of life through the day, except where some bit of land, less broken than the rest, had tempted a mountaineer to fix his habitation, and experiment in raising a scanty crop of corn or beans. These specks of green seemed mingling with the clouds, and were generally situated far above our route. We at length opened upon a valley completely locked in by abrupt hills, in the midst of which lay the little town of *La Venta*, or the Inn, situated 2600 feet above the sea.

Several plantain-fields prepared the visitor for the rude civilization beyond. The place was a miserable collection of mountain hovels, with about 600 inhabitants. We reached the Plaza half an hour before our pack-train, and rode directly to the *cabilda*, or court-house, usually considered in Honduras as public property, and standing in lieu of a house of entertainment. As

we dismounted, darkness fell suddenly over the mountains, and a heavy rain drove us precipitately into our adobe hut, boasting neither floor nor walls beside the mud of which it was constructed. The muleteers arrived soon after, and with them a barefooted gentleman, clad in a cotton shirt and loose trowsers of similar material, whose insignia of office—a cane—denoted him to be the *alcalde*. He demanded to see our passports, and awaited our answer in silence, while a group of village gossips stood at a respectful distance to observe our motions. T—— told him I was the American minister, at which the fellow opened wide his eyes and made me a low obeisance. An hour's hunt among the wretched huts produced absolutely nothing to eat. To our urgent inquiries for *tortillas*, eggs, or venison, the response was the usual "*no hay*." Even the jingle of silver failed to bring any thing to light.

"Tell me," said I to the *alcalde*, who now, wrapped in his blanket, had squatted on his hams near our fire, "how do you manage to live here? There seems to be nothing to subsist upon—or perhaps this is a time of unusual scarcity."

"Señor," said he, "we live on *tortillas* and *plantains*, and when these can not be procured we go hungry;" and the meagre look of the man seemed to warrant his assertion. The rain was now descending in torrents.

"Señor will not reach Cerro de Ule to-morrow," said he. "The roads are impassable."

"Oh," said T——, "as to that, an *Americano del Norte* can go any where; and this, you know, is a minister!"

The official regarded me in silence, the fire strangely illuminating his dusky features. A hook-nosed personage now announced himself as the Padre Ramirez, with whom I entered into conversation. His ideas of religion in *el Norte* were novel and interesting. "I have read," said he, "that you in the North have dozens of different styles and denominations of churches, and that each is in charge of a separate padre. Do the people in your country believe in more than one God?" His question led to a funny discussion as to the relative merits of the modern beliefs, and it was curious to observe the jumble of facts and absurdities he had heaped together in his seclusion; and yet, until recently, our own knowledge of Central America was little

clearer than his of *el Norte*. The conversation led to one good result. We took care not to offend the little dignity of Padre Ramierez, and the result was the discovery, through his agency, of some eggs and beans, to which we paid our respects with the voracity of tigers. Let the traveler in the mountains of Central America cultivate the padres, and it is seldom such spiritual acquaintance will not prove serviceable in satisfying his wants. A mouthful of excellent Cognac, with which we rewarded the holy man's exertions in our behalf, fully repaid him for his trouble.

Our hammocks were slung from the rafters of the house, and into them we bundled, and smoked ourselves to sleep by the blaze of the fire. Long before daylight Rafael awoke me, and presented the usual cup of strong coffee; and finding the mules ready packed and saddled, we mounted, and left town without stopping to bid adieu to our acquaintances of the previous night. We exchanged salutations with a number of village beauties leaving the stream near the town with the day's water on their heads, and recommenced ascending the sierra. By ten o'clock we were in the pine region. The belt of pine crowning the entire mountains of Honduras above the altitude of about 2500 feet is regularly defined, and seems to form a fringe along this portion of the Pacific slope. The air, until nearly noon, was cool and bracing, and the thermometer at daybreak showed a temperature of 68°.

As we ascended, we frequently turned to gaze back upon the scene, increasing in grandeur at every step of ascent. Far below us lay the mass of mountains we had passed the day before. The coast volcanoes were now hid in the intervening lowland mists, and the view was bounded by the succession of valleys and decreasing hills, until, in the distance, they seemed merged into a plain. Ridges upon ridges, running mostly to the southeast, presented a picture of grand and silent majesty. They were intersected with smaller spurs going in opposite directions. Pursuing our route, we crossed several brawling torrents, seeking their way to some branch of the larger rivers below, but now leaping in wild freedom from rock to dell, or sputtering along in foaming rapids.

At noon we reached a compactly-built town, with its adobe

church and paved *Plaza*, known as Savanna Grande, or the great plain. This is four leagues from La Venta, and occupies, like that place, a valley surrounded by a hedge of bald hills. The pine region extends from below this point quite over the Cordilleras, down the Atlantic slope much lower than on the Pacific side. The good Padre Domingo Borjas was an old friend of the family of my companion, and, recognizing his features as we halted before his little residence, he waddled out and welcomed us with true hospitality. A young student, who seemed to divide his attention between his religious studies and attending upon the wants of the padre, brought in the remains of the morning meal, consisting of a *tortilla* or two, which vanished in a twinkling. While our beasts were eating in the Plaza, we entered into conversation with our host, who, like most of the Central American priests, was intelligent, but ignorant of all matters not pertaining to his calling. In a little niche of his study were a dozen well-thumbed Mexican and Guatemalan editions of Spanish authors, and a few coarse water-colored prints of saints hung against the wall. Here I saw the first specimens of silver ore, and also some bits of alum, of which the padre said a mine existed near by. When he heard that my object was to examine the silver mines of the country, and perhaps return with a great American company to work them, he hastened out of the house, and presently returned with several residents of the town, some of them sporting no article of clothing but a shirt, and extremely scanty ones they were. These worthies commenced with one voice to describe certain silver mines they claimed to be the owners of, and insisted upon my remaining at Savanna Grande a week to visit them.

The town is the largest in this district, and is the centre of a thriving trade in *aguardiente*, which is manufactured in the vicinity in large quantities. The plantain-tree flourishes here, as in all sections of Honduras. It is to Central America what the potato is to Europe and the United States. It is an ingredient in every dish, and is served up boiled, roasted, baked, stewed, fried, and raw. According to Humboldt, the plantain affords forty times more nutriment than the potato, and an acre of them is equal to one hundred and thirty-three acres of wheat! It may thus be imagined that in a tropical climate, where the las-



situde consequent upon the heat will not permit the sturdy toil of the North, the culture of a fruit so easily grown as the plantain should be universal.

Crossing the sierras, we found them growing in every cleared space of ground. The poorest Indian can afford this luxury, which he has only to pluck from among the golden clusters within reach of his hand, and from Guatemala to Costa Rica the table of the wealthiest citizen is never without them. Like the *macaroni* of the Lazaroni in Naples, it is at once a luxury and an indispensable article of food. Father Borjas states that, since the commencement of the locust scourge, the poorer classes of the state must have starved but for the plantain, and cited an instance of the recent invasion of Honduras by the Guatemalans under Guardiola, when the inhabitants of Gracias carried the plantains into the mountains as they fled from the troops, who were finally obliged to quit the country to avoid starving. He concluded his remarks by denominating Honduras as the Russia of Central America, from the fact that it can never be successfully invaded when the people are unanimous against the enemy.

We parted from the good padre with regret, and resumed our journey toward *Cerro de Ule*, the highest peak of the western Cordillera of the state. A few miles beyond the town we passed the field of the battle fought in 1827 between Colonels Dias and Justo Mille, two of the principal revolutionary leaders of that day. The place was well calculated for a *guerrilla* fight, and my companion recounted some chivalric deeds of the contest with the pride of the Spaniard mantling his cheek. It was here that Morazan, "the Washington of Central America," first signalized himself in battle. Descending a steep hill, we came to the hacienda of Trinidad. Here a collection of really pretty señoritas, and rather extensive preparations in the way of cakes, coyol wine, jugs of aguardiente, new dresses, and gaudily-caparisoned horses, showed my friend that a wedding was about to be celebrated. "Aha!" said he, with a gay laugh, "now we shall see fun, besides getting something to eat."

We dismounted with many salutations, and exchanged compliments after the fashion of the country with these bright-eyed girls, when an inner door opened, and a wrinkled beldame met

us with a cold "*Adios, señores!*" We replied with all the warmth and alacrity of hungry men on their good behavior, but we soon found that we had mistaken our customer. She first harshly ordered the *muchachas* into the house, and then answered our request to purchase something to eat with the usual "*Señor, no hay.*" Now, as we could see through the chinks of the brushwood out-house several persons busily engaged cutting up a newly-slaughtered bullock, and knew, moreover, that another was being driven up to undergo a similar fate, we voted this the excess of meanness, and entered into a lengthy argument with the old dame, which, however, resulted in our discomfiture.

Louder and louder came the noise of spitting *tortillas* from within, and with every change of the breeze we were tantalized with the savory smell of their baking and the roasting of fat beef. The door was shut in our faces, and we were just mounting, with a wrathful malediction on the house and its inhospitable inmates, when a low "h—s—t!" from the farther corner of the dwelling attracted my attention. Two bright, intelligent eyes invited, and again alighting, I reached the spot just in time to receive an immense chunk of beef, warm from the slaughter-yard, from the fair hands of the bride herself! Nor was this all. Tripping softly back, she returned in an instant with a coarse cloth filled with savory *frijoles* and corn-cakes fried in *mantequilla*. Before I could return my thanks, she disappeared with a low laugh and a whispered "*Vaya! vaya!*" I shook the plunder in silent triumph at T——, whose sombre features lighted up with pleasure as he gazed.

We renewed our journey, and in a few minutes encountered a troop of mounted friends on their way to the scene of the nuptials. Here, at least, was no old woman to be jealous of strangers. We all dismounted, and my companion introduced me to half a dozen natives of Tegucigalpa, and fine-looking fellows they were, to say nothing of three slight but elegant female forms, whose closely-drawn veils left us to imagine the dark, flashing eyes and vivacious faces of the Spanish beauty. An hour was passed pleasantly under the pines, and as our new acquaintances were well supplied with Cognac and fruit, we felt no disposition to part company. At length every body mounted,

and we saw our wedding-party galloping through the woods, and sending back shouts of merry laughter long after they had passed from view.

We now began the ascent of *Cerro de Ule*, on the slope of which is situated the village of Nueva Arcadia. The mountain gusts came heavy and fitfully, denoting an approaching storm. We toiled painfully upward for another hour, following an uneven, zigzag path worn into the rocks by mule-travel. The sun sank into a sea of mist and clouds. We had nearly attained the highest traveled point on this part of the Cordilleras. The path, barely discernible in the rapidly-approaching darkness, extended along a nearly level space of land more thickly wooded than any we had passed since leaving the *tierras calientes*, and rather resembling a forest than any pine woods we had yet seen. These appeared the gloomier in the obscurity of the night, which soon overtook us, accompanied by a rain-storm momentarily increasing, until we found it impossible to keep the road. Often dismounting and proceeding on foot, we toiled slowly along, wet through by the squalls which passed, howling in quick succession through the trees, roaring grandly among the mountains. Vivid lightning, such as is rarely seen out of the tropics, flashed along the heavens, and peals of thunder added their voice to the sublimity of the scene.

In the lulls we could hear the ominous dashing of some mountain torrent, swollen into fury, and foaming down its rocky bed. As night set in we had noticed that the sierra broke off to the left into deep declivities, in our anxiety to avoid which we pushed too far into the forest, and, after an hour's ineffectual struggle among fallen trees and brambles, came to the uncomfortable conviction that we were lost. As it was not yet ten o'clock, we looked forward with no pleasant anticipations to a night of merciless storm, utter darkness, and no hope of shelter. To proceed in this impenetrable gloom was impossible, and the natives, used as they were to the sierras, could not retrace our steps with any degree of certainty.

We dismounted, and hewed down with the *machetes* the lower branches around us, and, collecting such decayed sticks and logs as the darkness would permit, erected a temporary *chosa* like the den of a Digger Indian, and spread over it the blankets of the

party. Blinded with the rain and lightning, which ever and anon illumined the dark vistas of the forest like a sudden gleam of Pandemonium, we crept, wet and shivering, beneath this scanty refuge, and huddled together after vainly attempting to kindle a fire with the water-soaked twigs which Vicente brought. To sleep was impossible, and, to crown our misfortunes, the clumsy wretch of a Rafael, in unloading one of the mules, had smashed the bottle of *aguardiente*, thus depriving us of even that doubtful stimulus. Now it was that we regretted our prolonged stay at the hacienda of Trinidad, interlarding our disjointed mutterings with occasional rather ungrateful anathemas upon the house and its inmates. With scarcely a "let up," the storm continued its malignant fury until nearly dawn, when the wet and cold becoming insufferable, we crawled out, determined to push on in some direction, no matter where. Any motion to keep the blood in circulation seemed preferable to the benumbed misery of inaction.

The mules, which had been tied by their *riattas* to the surrounding trees, were again loaded, and, Vicente taking the lead, we struck off to the westward, hoping by daylight to fall in with the road. My pocket compass enabled us to preserve a straight course, and, after an hour's tearing through the woods, we were gladdened with the "*Hoo-pah! viva la camina real!*" from the half-crazy Vicente. We had reached the beaten track, still stretching upward along the bald peak of *Cerro de Ule*.

At noon we came to the small hamlet of Nueva Arcadia, 4600 feet above the sea. It would be difficult to describe the utter wretchedness and squalor of these mountain villages. The races inhabiting them, though hardy and apparently healthy, are but little above the grade of brutes. We stopped at a deserted mud hut, and, thrusting open the door, entered with the eagerness of hunger, and set about preparing breakfast. Suddenly T—— made a leap out at the door, ejaculating,

"*Caramba! que pulgas estas!*"

He might well be excused for his precipitancy: his clothing *sparkled* with the rabid little insects, and the nipping of the few who had now inserted themselves into my neck and sleeves convinced me that I was equally alive with them. Breakfast was forgotten instantly, and the next half hour devoted to a species



of Feejee Island war-dance, to the great glee of the frowsy-headed little savages who had, as usual, collected around to stare at the strangers. The thermometer at one o'clock P.M. indicated 71° of Fahrenheit. Shortly after our arrival the mountains were again enveloped in clouds, and a heavy rain commenced which lasted the rest of the day. Though we could have reached Tegucigalpa before night, I proposed to build a fire and devote the remainder of the day to drying our equipage, rather than risk an attack of *calentura* by continuing our fatiguing scramble among the rocky gorges through which the route still led.

The village is surrounded by pine forests, which, as I have said, commence at an altitude of about 2500 feet, and clothe nearly the entire range of the Cordilleras of Central America. In localities where these do not occur, their place is supplied by low oaks and other upland shrubbery. The pine of the sierra does not attain the size of the Northern tree, being rarely over twenty-five inches in diameter, and from forty to eighty feet in feet in height. It is of the yellow and pitch-pine species, and specimens of the burs, and also of the bark and inner wood, which I brought from Olancho, as well as from the Pacific slope of the mountains, compared favorably with the best Northern lumber. The limestone character of the mountain, scantily covered with soil, affords but a slight hold for their roots. I often passed miles of pines prostrated by the winter northers, the roots of which had apparently extended laterally rather than downward, creeping among the interstices of the rocks, and presenting at the uptorn butts a mass of white, dried paste, composed of limestone, disintegrated quartz, and clay.

These features continued quite across the sierras into the Department of Olancho, where the pine region extends lower than on the Pacific side. The pine is generally straight-grained, and fully charged with pitch, which causes conflagrations in the woods. Unlike those of North America, the forests of Honduras are of a scanty growth, the trees standing several yards apart, and generally choked with underbrush. They inspire the traveler with none of the sublime admiration experienced in the grander forests of the United States.

Our stay in Nueva Arcadia through this day and the succeeding night would have been positively uncomfortable with

the cold but for the bright pitch-pine fire we kept blazing in the centre of the hut, having first fumigated it and burned out the fleas. At ten o'clock P.M. my thermometer showed a temperature of  $60^{\circ}$ , which was the coolest weather I had yet seen in the country. A chilly easterly wind succeeded the rain, and made us glad to wrap ourselves in thick blankets. At dawn we saddled, and, passing along the slope of *Ule*, stopped to gaze back upon the panorama beneath us, which, in the slow-moving clouds hanging around the distant peaks, resembled the troubled ocean heaving in a tempest.

We left the peak of *Ule* on our left, and, as it seemed, several hundred feet above us. I judged its altitude to be about 5000 feet above the sea. The crest of the mountains here presented a succession of table-lands and plateaus, with a shallow but fertile soil. The country was evidently productive, as small haciendas were scattered along its extent, which we soon found began to slope gently to the northeast. We had reached the summit of the *Cordilleras*, and I could not repress an exclamation of pleasure at noticing the course of the numerous rills running toward the Atlantic. These, however, discharge into the Rio Grande, passing near Tegucigalpa in the valley beyond, and emptying as the Moromulca into the Gulf of Fonseca.

Here we observed small groves of the wild *guava*, generally detached from all other trees, and containing small yellow fruit of the size of the apricot. Its sweet, aromatic flavor was more than grateful. The *guava* is eaten at all seasons. Its effect is pleasant and assuages thirst; the pulp is rather glutinous, but firm, and melts in the mouth; the fruit opens easily with the pressure of the hands. It is cultivated in the lower countries, where it becomes finer than when growing wild in the uplands. The tree is an awkward, scrubby affair, with small, blunt leaves.

Our rapid ride along this level and interesting country was an agreeable contrast to our struggle up the steeps of the mountains. The remainder of the trip would be downward to Tegucigalpa, and we hurried along our jaded beasts in pleased anticipation of the comforts of civilized life. The plain extends a distance of several leagues, prettily wooded and watered, with some of the productions of the temperate, and all of the tropical

regions growing in profusion. Here I saw the first Irish potatoes under cultivation; the market is Tegucigalpa, where they are purchased as a rarity by some of the wealthier families. The cereals are also raised on these upland plains. The view was surprising to one taught to regard Central America as the birth-place of plagues and fevers.

The whole country was of an emerald green, and dotted with horses and cattle. The crowing of cocks, and the many sounds of busy life, showed it to be the scene of industry and thrift. We passed twenty-two haciendas, each of which was the centre of a little cultivated field, and had its quota of live-stock in the shape of pigs, fowls, and screaming brats; all was in agreeable contrast to the wretched hamlets we had passed since leaving the coast. The air was bracing and exhilarating. This is one of the highest points to which cultivation has been carried in Honduras. From here the descent is rapid, the road leading around the edges of a precipice several hundred feet deep, and offering wild but extremely picturesque scenery. After an abrupt descent over rudely-constructed mule-paths, we came upon the Rio Grande. For the last hour we had known, from its boisterous voice heard far up in the sierra, that its waters were swollen to an unusual height. We approached the river by a winding path worn through the limestone. Here we found a deep river dashing among great rocks, and doubly angry after the heavy rains.

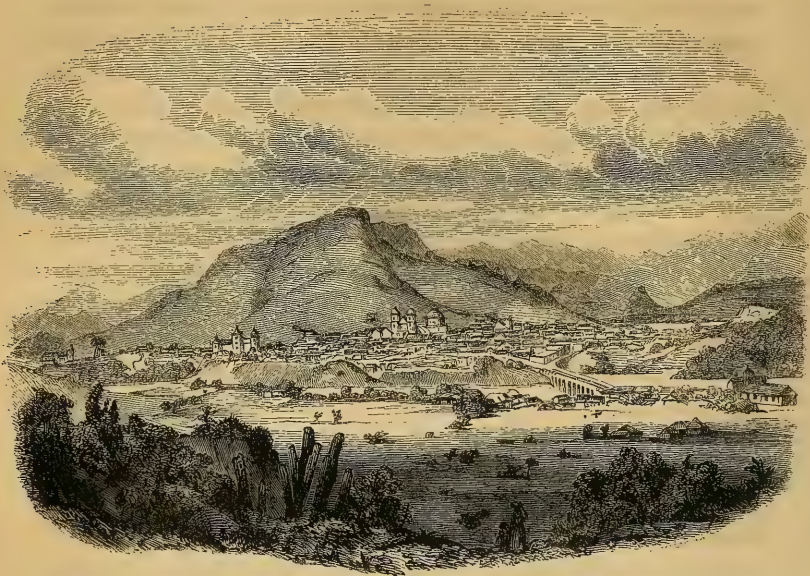
A party of pig-drivers were resting on the banks, awaiting the subsidence of the waters, which, in Honduras, rise and fall with remarkable quickness, influenced by the rains. T—— proposed to swim across one of the smoother rapids, in order at once to astonish the natives and ascertain the possibility of reaching the city before night. We plunged in to find the depth, but were soon glad to get back, and my companion, who was farthest out, came near losing his hold of a rock and going down the rapids. We buffeted the torrent to no avail, and got ashore exhausted and crestfallen. The drovers laughed, and we had scarcely commenced dressing when a sudden thunder-shower drove us into a neighboring jungle under a cliff. Here T—— scared out a nest of black wasps, and away we started again for a hut a few hundred yards below, the natives yelling

with delight, as well they might do, for our appearance was any thing but a dignified one. T—— did not tell this party that I was "*el ministro*," for reasons best known to himself. The *muchachos* unloaded the mules, and we were soon laughing heartily at our adventure. I was thankful that our assailants were not the dreaded "choker hornets," of which T—— gave me a graphic account. In Conder's work on Mexico and Guatemala, p. 186, they are described as "a species of venomous wasp, called *ahorcadores* (hangmen), on account of the singular remedy which is believed to be the only means of averting the fatal effects of their sting; this is to plunge the sufferer immediately into the water, or to compress the throat, in the manner of hanging, until he is nearly exhausted." The *dueña* of the hut prepared a palatable meal for us, and a few hours later, the river having fallen, we saddled and made our final start for Tegucigalpa, where the president and officers of the government had been located for several weeks.

From here the distance to the city is three leagues. At every turn we encountered evidences of the vicinity of a flourishing town. Mule-trains, loaded with the products of the country, passed contentedly along toward the general market. Snug country houses, thatched with palm-leaves or roughly tiled, stood along the road, which had now become a level and well-beaten highway. Horsemen, returning to town from a visit to some hacienda in the outskirts, cantered gayly past, and turned to take a second look at our travel-stained little cavalcade. Pedestrians, bearing loads of vegetables and fruits upon their heads, shouted the never-failing "*Buenos tardes, caballeros!*" as we passed. The country seemed in a happy and prosperous state, and almost unconscious of the political turmoil marking its history. With the exception of the horsemen, all we saw were *sin zapatos*, or barefooted.

As we passed over a small ridge, T—— directed my attention to an opening in the trees, through which I obtained my first view of Tegucigalpa, situated in the northeastern extremity of an extensive valley known as "*El Potrero*." The sun had just emerged from a bank of rain-clouds, and the many white turrets and belfries of the city glistened in the afternoon sunlight. A beautiful rainbow spanned the valley, and the verdure





CITY OF TEGUCIGALPA.

of the adjacent mountains, blending with the purple tints of the declining day, heightened the charm of romance, never entirely separable from these secluded relics of the better days of Spain. We pursued our ride over a grassy plain, adorned with flowers and spotted with bunches of cactus. At intervals we caught glimpses of the city between the foliage; the increasing numbers of people showed it to be a *dia de fiesta*, and as we neared the place, the sound of many church-bells came faintly and musically through the air. The plain over which we approached the city is arid and dry in the summer season. Here Cabañas, with two hundred men, was defeated in 1838 by the Guatemalans with eight hundred.

We now came to the River Guasaripe, flowing slowly through the level country, and emptying in the Rio Grande near the city. This we forded easily, and on the opposite side met a number of mounted citizens, who, seeing T—— (a son-in-law of Morazan), surrounded him and exchanged congratulations. On my being introduced to the party, they turned back and formed a sort of triumphal escort. A smart gallop brought us to the little outer town of Comayaguela, or little Comayagua. This has

a distinct jurisdiction from Tegucigalpa, and, being rather romantically situated, is the general afternoon resort of the citizens. We passed through, and crossed the white sandstone bridge spanning the torrent at the entrance of the city. Here the Rio Grande, augmented by the waters of the Guasaripe and Rio Chiquito, glances down from the dividing ridge between the Departments of Tegucigalpa and Yoro, and flows into the Rio de Nacaome. The bridge has ten arches, the abutments being pointed on the upper face to break the force of the water, the old bridge of the Spaniards having been washed away in 1830, at which time, it is said, the present one was constructed by workmen from Guatemala. Here the city of Tegucigalpa commenced.

We entered a paved street, bordered with handsome stone and plastered adobe houses, the walls painted blue, red, cream-color, or white, after the fancy of the proprietor. The grated balconies, narrow, grass-grown sidewalks, regularly tiled roofs, paved *patios*, the peculiar and simple style of architecture, the cries of street-venders, the equestrian display, and the dark-eyed, *mantilla'd* faces gazing listlessly upon us from the cool, prison-like residences, reminded me more of Havana than any city I had yet seen in Central America. The lack of the eternal din of bugles and drums, and the absence of the *volante* of Cuba, however, soon destroyed the resemblance in my mind.

The streets are all named, and the town struck me at first glance as an exception to the usual ruined, deserted appearance of Central American cities. This is the head-quarters of fashion and gayety in Honduras. My various letters of introduction were rather a source of embarrassment, as the first to whom I should present myself would, in compliance with the established usage of the place, consider me his guest during my visit.

Out of the package I finally selected one from Castellon to the hospitable Señor Don Jose Maria Losano, one of the wealthiest residents of Tegucigalpa. T——, who was a nephew of the old Don, nodded assent to my look of inquiry, and to the *Calle de Morazan* we made our way, my companion answering kind salutations from all quarters. We entered the paved street, and, looking beyond, saw the heads of two elderly gentlemen pop out of the grated *ventana de sala* for a moment,

then suddenly disappear. In another moment the proprietor of the mansion had gained the street, and was shaking hands heartily with my companion. As soon as I was introduced, the house and all it contained was placed "at my disposition."

How grateful to our aching limbs and heated brows was the quiet coolness of the back corridor of Don Jose Maria's residence! Having thrown off our wet and soiled clothing, and donned a presentable attire from our trunks, we swung at ease in the two comfortable hammocks, enjoying to the full a delicious draft of *tiste* and the agreeable conversation of the "*Niña Teresa*." As T—— had assured me would be the case, I found that my name had preceded me, and the visitors who occupied our time until night persisted in calling me "doctor," and placing their houses at my disposition. I had long since learned the formal style used in the country, and what with exchanging *cigarros*, and repeatedly leaving the hammock to return the many salutations, we were both heartily glad when bedtime arrived.

## CHAPTER X.

Interview with President Cabañas.—Personal Appearance.—Opinion of Olancho.—Past and Present of Tegucigalpa.—Churches.—"La Paroquia."—A Serenade.—Sunday Scenes.—The Plaza Market.—Morning.—Bill of Fare.—Liquors.—Chocolate.—Bread.—Potatoes.—Manners at Table.—Servants.—Style of Building.—Courtesies of Visiting.—Flowers and Flower Gardens.—Birds.—Amalgamation.—Jealousies of the Blacks.—The Liberal Party.—Health of Natives.—Couriers.—Amusements.—Dullness of the City.

DURING the few days passed in exchanging visits and delivering letters of introduction, I found opportunity to study the character and habits of the secluded population, among whom I had already acquired several estimable friends. I determined now to lay before President Cabañas the object of my visit to Honduras. I had received previous intimation that he understood my views, and had expressed himself favorably disposed toward them.

Learning that the President would be unoccupied at 10 o'clock, I entered with T—— the *Casa del Gobierno*, situated on the southern bank of the river, and directly overlooking the



bridge. A sentinel stood at the door, who presented arms as we passed into an interior corridor, paved with large square flags, opening out of which were apartments appropriated to the various civil and military officers. The house was more spacious and in better repair than any I had yet seen. In the court-yard below grew a variety of beautiful trees, and several flights of stone steps led from this arena to rooms along the second story; the house is one of *dos altos*, and is regarded with peculiar interest as the former property and residence of Morazan, who was a native of Tegucigalpa.

Passing along the corridor we were met by a servant, who, with rather profuse civilities, ushered us into a spacious and gratefully cool apartment; the western side opened, through two wide folding-doors, into a balcony, from which the lady of General Morazan (a son of the former President of Central America) was enjoying the prospect. She received us politely, and had just finished a prettily-turned welcome to Honduras, with the hope that my enterprise would prove a successful one, when an attendant announced that the President would be pleased to see us.

A curtain of faded red damask, extended across the opposite end of the room, served to separate the *oficina* from the *sala*. This was drawn aside, and, passing its ample folds, we entered a small cabinet; the furniture, consisting of a few desks filled with red-taped files of papers, a large table, and a scanty supply of chairs, denoted its use. T——, who was related to him, advanced, and introduced me to the President. He was seated at a desk, from which he turned toward us as we entered. Cabañas at this time was fifty-two years of age; but the cares and hardships of military life had furrowed his features. His countrymen have ever placed an unwavering confidence in his public course, to which, even among those inimical to his liberal policy, none have ascribed other than the purest motives. As I replied to his manly expressions of welcome, so *anti-Spanish* in their evident sincerity, I felt that here at least was a man whose public career is admitted to be unstained by a single cruelty, or debased by one treacherous or ungenerous act.

During the conversation I had opportunity to compare him with the many current reports respecting his personal appear-



ance. His rather diminutive stature was offset by a remarkably erect mien, and in conversation his animated gestures were in keeping with the intelligent play of his features. He is, indeed, a noble wreck of manhood, and full of placid dignity. His eyes are mild, but dark, and full of intellect. The hair, which was once brown, is now gray, but long, while the beard, patriarchal in its length and snowy hue (and which, in accordance with his vow, he has never cut since the murder of Morazan), imparts additional interest to the sad expression of his face. Cabañas is covered with wounds received in unnumbered fights, many of them lost to history in the seclusion of the little theatre of war where they have occurred, but almost incredible in savage fury and bloody reckoning.

The President accepted my letters, and expressed himself favorably disposed to the introduction of American capital and enterprise for the development of the resources of Honduras. He referred to his own recent action in dispatching Señor Barundia to the United States with full powers to negotiate for the extension of special privileges to American citizens, and lamented the untimely death of the envoy at the moment the objects of his mission were about being consummated. He spoke particularly of the Department of Olancho and the famous Guayape River, and afterward advised T—— to deter me from my proposed visit there, as the inhabitants, separated from the rest of the state by formidable mountain barriers, had, since the independence of 1821, considered themselves a sort of local Democratic community, refusing to contribute toward the public expenses, and regarding strangers with jealousy and suspicion. In fact, during this interview, he twice expressed a decided disinclination to have me enter an unknown section of Central America, with the inhabitants of which the supreme government had repeatedly been in dispute as to impositions for the support of the general safety, and who had even recently arisen in arms to repel the national recruiting officers. He, however, admitted that, with full and explicit letters, and a reasonable degree of prudence, I might visit the locality of the Zelayas in Olancho, be hospitably received, and perhaps enabled to effect some important contracts with them in relation to the celebrated gold region of the Guayape. These, however, being

time out of mind the prerogative of the civilized Indians inhabiting that section of country, might possibly lead to jealousies on their part. This and other scraps of information I obtained from Cabañas, who, I felt assured, spoke frankly and above-board. It was evident that his information respecting this extreme end of Honduras was limited. He admitted he had never been there, and this I discovered to be the case with every military leader in the state excepting Morazan, who penetrated to Lepaguare with a few followers in 1829, and entered into a treaty with the *Olanchanos*.

As my object was to obtain first the permission of the supreme government to make explorations and enter into contracts with natives of Honduras, and afterward to visit the auriferous region, of which I had heard vague accounts since my arrival in the country, I was in no haste to quit Tegucigalpa without making an attempt to procure some essential privileges from the government.

These subjects discussed, the general referred to the United States and the policy of the American government toward Central America. His frequent interviews with Mr. Squier at Comayagua and Gracias had enabled him to form a tolerably correct idea of our country. I am convinced that Cabañas would make any sacrifice to be the means of encouraging American enterprise in Honduras. Besides his instrumentality in procuring the passage of the Inter-oceanic Rail-road grant, he has done every thing consistent with the honor of his country in throwing open the state to immigration. Thirty years of unremitting service in the countless political strifes of the country have convinced him, as well as many other leading statesmen of Central America, that it is only by the superior energy and intelligence of North Americans and Europeans that the natural resources of the states can be developed. He expressed himself ready to lend his aid to all honorable negotiations with our countrymen, but implacably opposed to any filibuster attempts against Central America. I afterward learned that the news of Colonel Kinney's colonization scheme had recently arrived in Tegucigalpa, and that persons disposed to less confidence in my objects than Cabañas had associated me with that enterprise. This retarded my operations, especially with

the more virulent opponents of Americans in Central America.

It was late in the day when I took leave of Cabañas, whom I have since had cause to regard with an affection which nothing short of his kindness of heart and unassuming courtesy of demeanor could have created.

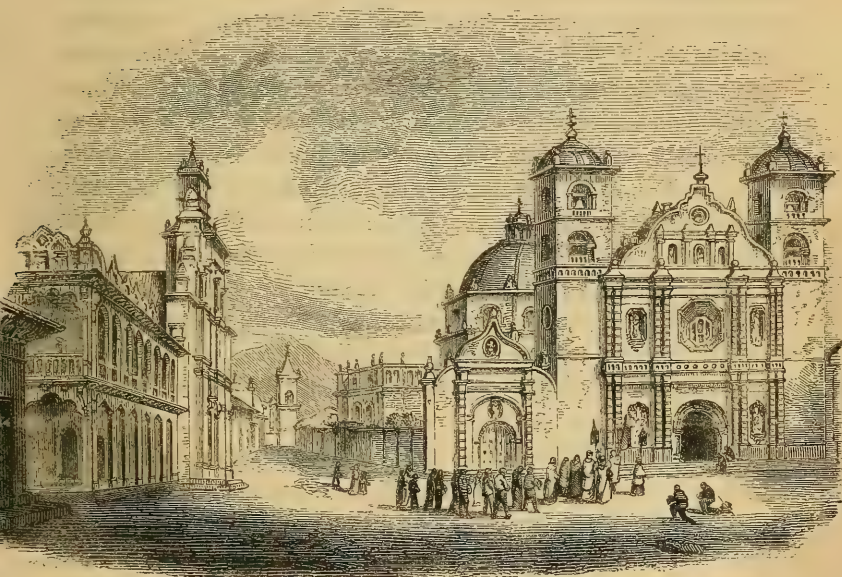
Tegucigalpa, though not the seat of government in Honduras, is the largest and most important city in the republic. Its population is now 12,000, composed of one half *mestizos* and mulattoes, the remainder divided between whites, negroes, quadroons, and Indians. The pure whites are far in the minority. The city, which is regularly laid out, is about two centuries old, and was known in the days of the early Spanish settlers as *Taguzgalpa*. Since the independence the place has decreased in population, owing to the emigration of aristocratic Spanish families, whose wealth, accumulated by means of the celebrated silver mines in this department, was suddenly withdrawn to Spain and the Havana. With their departure and the immediate commencement of the wars, which have at last exhausted the energies of the country, the mining industry of the department became extinct. The blacks, who had worked the "*minerales*" as slaves, became free by legislative action, and the miners, discouraged by taxes, gave up in despair. The workmen were seized and forcibly enlisted in the petty strifes between the states. The mines fell to decay, or were purposely filled up by their owners, who have, nevertheless, retained their claim to them from year to year. With the decline of the great branch of industry which had served to support the people, the city subsided into a dreamy quiet, from which it has not yet emerged. Such is the present condition of Tegucigalpa, once the most considerable mining city in Central America. Its large and substantially-built churches and private dwellings, now but sad relics of their former splendor, alone attest to the decay which a quarter of a century's indolence has entailed. Several of the mines have been opened within the last ten years, and operations resumed, but the proprietors, not possessing the means, information, or energy of their ancestors, make but feeble imitations of the old Spanish methods.

During my two visits to Tegucigalpa and its immediate vicin-



ity, in which nearly two months were spent, I made a large collection of notes and extracts from old Spanish and Guatemalan works in relation to the former state of the silver mines and the political condition of the people. The country described is one whose resources, added to a temperate climate, is likely to attract the attention of Americans, and, it is reasonable to suppose, will eventually become settled by the Anglo-Saxon race, from the fact that our people may live there the year round without prejudice to health.

The principal buildings in the city are the few churches and old convents, now divested of their former riches, but still preserving the half Moorish style of architecture. Most of these are sadly dilapidated. The largest and most venerable pile among them is *La Paroquia*, occupying the east side of the



LA PAROQUIA AND CONVENT OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Plaza of that name, and only excelled by two churches in the five states, those of Leon and Guatemala. This was built at the expense of a devout padre, one of the great Zelaya family, whose branches now extend to all parts of Central America. The only public clock in the state hangs in the belfry of one of



the towers. The building is lofty, and occupies an entire square. A massive dome rises over the body of the church; the cupola is surmounted by a crown, and topped with a large gilded cross. The edifice is built of burned brick, made in the country, and the whole plastered and whitewashed. The exterior is adorned with niched statues representing the saints, and a variety of carving illustrative of scriptural scenes. The interior is spacious, and ornamented with coarse portraits of the apostles and the holy family. A gallery extends around the inner walls, in one part of which a small, broken-winded organ peals forth discordant strains at mass, accompanying the choral voices.

On the second night after our arrival we were awakened by a loud knocking at the *sala* window, and, upon opening it, were saluted with a modest "*Buena noche, caballeros!*" while, at the same time, an itinerant band of serenaders, composed of performers on the guitar, violin, flute, and bass viol, commenced some very pretty selections from a favorite opera. The night was starry and calm, and the music, though any thing but scientific, had rather a romantic effect as it echoed softly among the moonlit walls of the opposite buildings. The party played several waltzes, and finally I was surprised with a laughable attempt at *Old Dan Tucker!* The metre was ill suited to the Spanish drawling style of music generally practiced in Honduras, and had I heard the familiar voice of the razor-strop man, or Abby Folsom herself, I could scarcely have been more astonished. The principal performer had lived in Virgin Bay, Nicaragua, and there had caught the air from the California passengers.

The climate of this section of Honduras is not excelled for salubrity in all Central America. A volume could be written illustrating the pure, balmy quality of this upland atmosphere. During my stay here, the only uncomfortable hour was the early morning, when the air was always too sharp and bracing. A thermometrical table kept by me in various parts of the state for several months best illustrates the evenness of temperature in these mountains. On some days the rain, after falling with tropical fury, gives place to a pure, invigorating air, such as is sometimes felt after a summer thunder-shower in New England. In the warmer months the heat is rarely oppressive, and at the

coldest seasons fires are only occasionally required for comfort. It is here proper to mention a snow and hail storm occurring in December, 1848. Snow had never before been known on the highest lands of the state, nor had the mercury ever fallen to the freezing point: it was therefore the more surprising. A bank of black clouds was observed slowly to work up from the northeast, and centre about a league southwest of the city. Soon after, the air was darkened with "falling ice," as my informants denominated it, and the earth was quickly covered by the descending masses. Trees, plants, and birds were destroyed. The ice was spread over a space of two square leagues in such quantity as to remain on the ground for two weeks.

This phenomenon, which, occurring in the torrid zone, may well excite the inquiry of the curious in such matters, is corroborated by the whole population of the city, few of whom had ever before seen ice. In some deep gullies the frozen substance lay four feet deep. Many of the hail-stones weighed several ounces. Señores Vigil, Losano, Ferrari, and a multitude of citizens stood and witnessed the spectacle. The *aguadoras*, or water-bearers, came into the city for several days with cakes of ice (wrapped in cloths and balanced upon their heads) weighing from twelve to twenty pounds. These were eagerly bought, and used to cool drinking water. The ice fell for an hour. Prayers were offered in the churches that the great *chubasco de hielo* had been averted by the saints from falling upon and destroying the city.

The ceremonies of the Catholic Church are observed with scrupulous exactness. Many attend mass in the morning, and the clanging of bells is the only sound capable of arousing the people from a state of lethargy as profound as that in which the commerce and trade of the country itself are buried. A church procession is a matter of every-day occurrence. These usually pass through the *Calle de Morazan*. First appear twenty or thirty boys bearing lighted candles, which, if the display is for the departing soul of some *inferma*, are paid for by the family. The friends and relatives of the sick person follow, and after them four friars, bearing a silken awning or canopy over the padre, who walks to the music of violins and a bass viol. From the rim of the canopy are suspended red silken tassels, support-

ed by boys arrayed in white garments. Then follow a large procession of señoritas, repeating prayers for the soul of the passing spirit with a volubility quite remarkable to hear. The buzzing of many voices, the monotonous chanting of the priests, and the discordant scraping of stringed instruments struck me as quite sufficient to frighten any orderly and well-disposed soul out of the world.

At the passing of such processions, the whole of Don Maria's household usually fell upon their knees and joined fervently in prayers for the afflicted neighbor. This remnant of the old exaggerated forms of Catholicism is, perhaps, well adapted to a population on whom it is necessary to impress a religious awe by the formalities of the creed.

Among the many persons with whom I exchanged visits was Señor Cacho, Minister of Hacienda, a gentleman some sixty years of age, but full of work and vivacity—patriotic and enthusiastic on the Liberal question. This gentleman, a chemist as well as politician, is, moreover, the proprietor of several mines of cinnabar in the Department of Gracias, which he expressed an anxiety that I should visit. Señor Cacho is strongly in favor of encouraging American immigration to Honduras, and so expressed himself to me repeatedly.

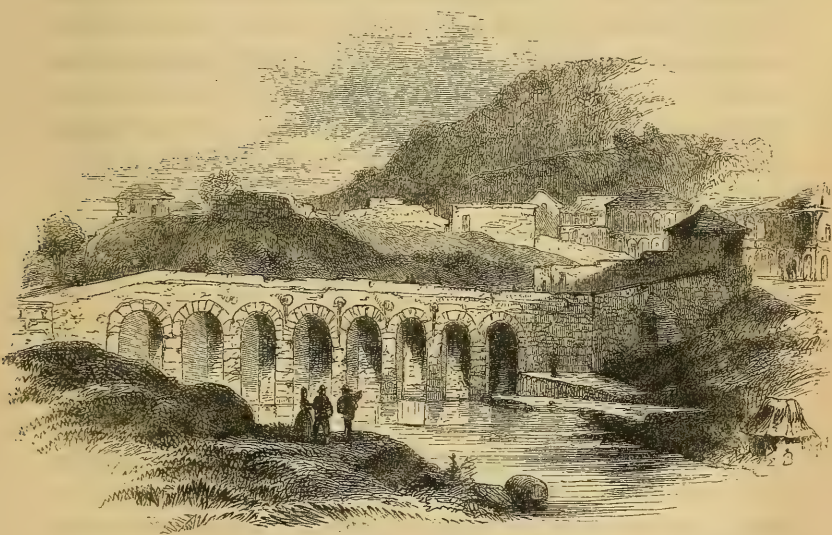
On Sunday one may see life in Tegucigalpa. This is observed rather as a day of recreation than of worship. The shops are open, and display their stock of goods to the best advantage. Laborers have been paid off, and every body has money. The shops are well stocked with traps of all kinds: manufactured Sherry wine, imported *via* Balize, for \$1 per bottle, and Champagne for \$1.25. The principal stores are in the Plaza and the streets opening from it. Many of the dealers are from Havana, which also supplies a considerable portion of the goods. Dry-goods shops were filled with what appeared to me costly dresses, and as for female finery, I saw almost every thing a lady might call for: like an American country grocery, they contain every thing likely to meet with a ready sale.

With fruits the market is well supplied during the morning and early forenoon. These, consisting in part of *limes*, *oranges*, *nísperos*, *papayas*, *cocoanuts*, *lemons*, *ananas*, *bananas*, *jocotes*, *figs*, *pine-apples*, and *melons*, are spread in tempting



profusion on large pieces of cloth, on hides, or in baskets along the porch of the barracks, forming one side of the *Plaza de la Paroquia*. One may purchase with a silver *medio* (six cents) all the fruit he will find it safe to eat in a day. The market-women stand in groups around, and pass the day chatting with each other, or oftener engaged in loud laughter with the soldiers or loafing fellows always to be found congregated about the sunny porch.

To enjoy life in these mountain regions, you must rise early and take the delightful breeze of the morning, when the dew is yet fresh on the plantain leaves, and the pavements of the town have not been submitted to their diurnal heating. Nothing can excel the sensations of the early riser as he issues forth and strolls in the brisk air toward the Plaza, or, if he is equal to the shock, wends his way to some secluded spot below the city, and joins the merry group splashing in the mad waters of the



BRIDGE OF TEGUCIGALPA.

river. From this you may easily reach the summit of Zapasuca, to the northwest of the city, overlooking Comayaguela and the valley of the Rio Grande. Returning, you take a cup of coffee or cacao, and then promenade, or amuse yourself with a book or *La Gaceta* from Guatemala until breakfast. This takes



place about ten o'clock, though it is often delayed until nearly noon.

The bill of fare for breakfast usually consists of boiled rice and beans, salads, bread, butter, and cheese, tortillas, *café con leche*, and fruit, and while I was in the country it rarely differed from this. For dinner you have vermicelli soup, roast beef, salad, and many of the vegetables common in the United States. Besides these, you have the *ollas* fried with garlic, the *picadillo* of half-cooked lights, oil, rice, and plantains, *higado* or baked slices of liver, *salchichas* stuffed with lard and garlic, *catamales* filled with bits of fat meat and cheese, *carne cocido*, *calde*, and, lastly, rice boiled with *mantequilla* and *chiles*. *Verduras*, or greens, a favorite accompaniment, consists of plantains, pieces of pumpkin, and cabbage. These comprise the common solid dishes of the country; but there is often, in addition, bread soup, and a mixture of rice and vegetables, the name of which is local, and has escaped me. This is the usual fare in the interior of Honduras. On the coast, to judge from an account given by Henderson, p. 134, the fare is more varied, and, perhaps, equally palatable. At a dinner were served up for a party of Englishmen calipash, soused maniti, fricasseed guana, waree steaks, barbecued monkey, armadillo curry, turtle soup, parrot pie, roast antelope, smoked peccary, boiled Indian rabbit, stewed hiccatee, and calipee! The author adds below,

“*Nec sibi cœnarum quivis temere arroget artem,  
Non prius exacta tenui ratione saporum.*”—Hor., Sat.

The fastidious stranger will find but few liquors in any part of Central America suited to his taste. The wines especially are a burlesque on the name. In the days of the Spanish rule the culture of the grape was prohibited, and since the rejection of the mother country the vine has not been introduced. The wine consists mostly of cheap imitations brought from Balize, Truxillo, or the Bay of Fonseca, to which points they are imported in English and Italian vessels. *St. Julian Medoc*, *Sherry*, *Champagne*, and a variety of sweet mixtures labeled *Elixir d'Amour* and other like names, are found in the *tiendas*. The *aguardiente del pais* is perhaps the most harmless liquor that can be taken in Central America. The doctors, foreign and na-

tive, recommend its use in traveling. This is generally placed in a small decanter on the table at dinner, and serves as a settler after the meats.

The prepared chocolate of Central America is somewhat like that brought from Mexico, but the method of preparing it is different. After a hot day's ride I know nothing more soothing, and, at the same time, delightfully palatable, than a foaming cup of the *chocolate de Honduras*. I had a large boxful made to carry out of the country, and noted the manner in which it is "put up." A pound of cacao is baked or parched, being carefully stirred, until the shell cracks, after which the husk is rubbed or shelled off by chafing between the hands. It is then ground in the *matete*, as corn is prepared for *tortillas*, reducing the substance to an oily paste. About one ounce and a half of vanilla is added, with enough powdered cinnamon to suit the taste of the maker, and sugar if required. When this, by working, is reduced to a liquid consistency, it is allowed to drop in small round cakes, each of which, when hardened, makes two ordinary cups of chocolate by simply dissolving them in boiling water and cream. The top is covered with a fragrant froth. The steamers plying between San Francisco and San Juan del Sur have latterly brought an excellent quality of chocolate from Nicaragua, but I have never seen any to equal that made to order in Eastern Honduras.

Wheaten bread in small rolls is sold at the street corners and left at the door by a barelegged *panadero*, who walks the streets with his stock in trade on his head. *Tortillas* are universally preferred, and are found, crisp and smoking, on every table. During Lent, the devout Catholics are supplied with dried oysters from Fonseca Bay, brought up the sierra in bags, and sold by the pound. These are eaten with potatoes.

About twice a week I observed a dish of *papas*, or Irish potatoes, on the table, which Don Jose Maria had evidently procured as a special luxury for me. He always eyed them with pride, and was constantly urging me to load my plate with them. They were diminutive and quite white, but tasted very well with any of the made dishes. The potato is said to have been brought to Central America from Peru, but one of the padres in Tegucigalpa assured me that it was indigenous, and that it

could be found growing wild in the mountains. I never heard this statement corroborated. The potato can only be grown in the highest lands of the country. At Santa Lucia, about 4500 feet above the sea, I saw a small potato-field, from which, in March, some of the families of Tegucigalpa were being supplied. They bring a *medio* (six cents) a pound. They are planted immediately after the rains have moistened the earth sufficiently to admit of plowing. The method of cultivation is a rude imitation of that pursued at the North. The seed, in the lower country, quickly runs to balls. In the mountains of Guatemala this vegetable is also raised, and carried many leagues to market on the backs of mules. One day, at table, I ventured to assert, with as much unconcern as I could assume, that I had seen potatoes in California weighing three pounds (not an uncommon size there). Don Jose Maria gazed at the little vegetable marbles in the dish before us and then at me with an incredulous smile, but instantly remembering the courtesies of the host, he nodded assent. It was evident he regarded this as a traveler's tale.

The manners at table are generally sedate and always courteous. Hilarity at meal-times is seldom seen. The custom of placing a tumbler for each person at table is unknown, the water being brought when the meal is finished. After dinner comes coffee, jams, or preserved fruit, and a variety of sugared sweetmeats. The health of the master and mistress of the house is pledged, as elsewhere, in the first glass of wine or other beverage. Servants are difficult to procure in democratic Honduras, where every able-bodied fellow is liable to be seized as a soldier. The few that can be obtained are awkward, and require months of training to be made useful. They are generally mulattoes, and without intelligence. The cooking is done in a small building behind the dwelling-house, built of adobe; the range or fire-place, also of adobe, is called the *fogon*.

Most of the natives of Honduras reside on the ground floor. If you ask the reason of this, in Nicaragua, it is to avoid earthquakes; in Honduras, it is because their *antepasados* built in this manner—innovations being distasteful to the Spaniard. The principal apartment, denominated the *sala*, is used as a parlor or reception-room, and here the family<sup>11</sup> pass the greater

part of the day, *doing nothing* in the forenoon, and, as a friend once remarked to me, sitting at the window in the afternoon and evening to recover from the fatigue of it.<sup>41</sup> The corridor or porch often extends quite around the house, the rear one facing upon a paved *patio* or yard generally containing a few fruit-trees, and surrounded with high mud walls, protected from the rains by roofs of tiles. The *cocina* or cook-house forms one side, and a stable the other. All these small buildings are kept nicely whitewashed. An immensity of clean shirt bosom and a newly-painted house are the peculiar pride of the Spaniard.

The master of the house always meets his visitor as he enters, and, at his departure, ushers him to the door, holding his cane and hat. If you are particularly welcome, or your visit is regarded as an honor, your host accompanies you through the corridor quite to the street gate, and you will do well if you are able to make the concluding bow and have the final "*adios, señor mio*;" for, no matter how often you repeat it, Don Fulano considers it a breach of etiquette not to have the last word in a leave-taking. I have often experimented in this, and never yet was able to gain a verbal victory over my entertainer.

The residences of the wealthier classes are cleanly and cool, have neat gardens in the rear adorned with beautiful flowers, and birds of the country in wooden cages. Flower culture is not generally practiced, and in the higher lands one rarely meets with wild flowers of such size and beauty as should be expected in the tropics. Nature seems to have reserved her gaudy colors for the plumage of birds, and has thus more than compensated for their absence in the floral kingdom. Hyacinths, roses, pinks, and honeysuckles, blue and white, were sometimes seen, and the latter frequently attains such profusion in a wild state as to choke and impede the growth of the corn, among which it clammers and flourishes.

Among the birds in Tegucigalpa and vicinity I saw the macaw, goldfinch, redbird, greenbird (the beautiful *verderon*, with spotted breast), the yellow thrush of superb plumage, the parrot, and many others. Some of these are not common to the temperate uplands of the interior, but are brought here from their native plains of the coast. There is also a very beautiful



species of the orange-colored thrush, with a black breast. The



TROGONS RESPLENDENS.

bird of Paradise, or one not unlike it, is found in Guatemala and Honduras, and killed for the surpassing beauty of its plumage. It is the ancient *quetzal* (*Trogons Resplendens*), and in Honduras is sometimes called the *palo-ma real*, from its fancied resemblance in shape to the dove. Its entire body is of a pale rose-color, the head a shade darker, and the wings of a

lustrous green. The tail of this splendid bird has seven feathers which attain the length of nearly three feet. A specimen is said to have been exhibited at the Universal Exposition at Paris in 1855, but, with that exception, I believe this rare creature has not been noticed by ornithologists. The same may be said of many gorgeous denizens of the forests of interior Central America.

The system of amalgamation of races which has been introduced into Honduras during the last thirty years has almost obliterated the distinguishing line between the blacks and whites. This is, perhaps, the greatest misfortune that could have befallen the country. The mixture of the offshoots of the white, negro, and Indian have entailed upon the country a race ranging in hue from chocolate to cream-color. An occasional white may be found among the descendants of the old aristocratic Spanish families, who have jealously avoided intermarrying with the Indians or blacks; but these instances are rare, and, with the actual numerical increase of the others, they seem to regard the eventual extermination of the white race with a resigned despondency.

After the independence, the pure whites discovered a growing jealousy among the blacks and mixed races of their superior intelligence. These last, however, were sufficiently well pleased with the overthrow of the Spanish rule and the establishment of Republicanism, with which they anticipated an immediate influx of wealth and ease, and a change for the better not unlike that looked forward to by the French Revolutionists of 1848. The sudden change gave rise to the Liberal and Conservative parties, the former of whom advocated the establishment of a grand confederacy of the Central American States, and the latter, composed of the remnants of the old Spanish families, the maintenance of separate state governments. These were assisted by the many petty aspirants for power in various sections, and the priesthood, who, all-powerful, and holding the arm of the Church in terror over the superstitious multitude, determined to sustain the few wealthy families in the country as best calculated to preserve to the Church its original sway. The Liberals have usually been supported by the mass of the people, while the Conservatives, or "Serviles," as they have been denominated, have endeavored to earn popular favor by propitiating the blacks and Indian races, and exciting them against the whites.

These issues, the real cause of the never-ending wars between the states, have latterly arrived at such a point that a few years must decide them for one or the other party. The series of events which in Nicaragua have enlisted American adventurers in the Liberal cause is, perhaps, destined to settle the question of *castes* or races more speedily than could otherwise have been the case for many years to come. Circumstances have occurred in the last two years that have materially altered the position of affairs, and families formerly the most instrumental in enlisting the blacks and Indians in the deadly feuds of the country now stand in fear of these elements as destined to overshadow and exterminate them, unless the introduction of the more potent race of North Americans shall counterbalance the increasing numbers of the blacks. But few families have escaped the taint of amalgamation. The priesthood is every year becoming more generally represented by the negro, and these regard with ill-concealed jealousy the advance of Americans into any part of

Central America. Every effort to encourage the immigration of foreigners by the Liberals is watched with hostility by the colored priests.

The great men of the country among the Liberals are nearly all dead, murdered or worn out in the hopeless struggle. Valle, Morazan, Bustillos, Barrundia, and Molina have passed away, with the goal of their hopes almost in sight. There now remain Cabañas, Cacho, Mejia, and a few others, whose efforts for the establishment of the old Liberal party and the union of the Central American States on the Morazan basis have been the cause of their expatriation and persecution.

With the decline of the Liberal party the negro race has gradually gained the ascendancy in Honduras. Even a negro servant can not be procured, that class refusing to employ themselves where manual labor is required. In one or two instances foreigners have brought free colored traveling servants into the country, but they quickly fall into the indolent habits of the blacks around them, become "gentlemen," and quit their employers. The stranger with an excellent servant may thus suddenly find himself minus that useful personage, who from plain Bob Long has become Señor Don Roberto Longorio, upon a par with many of the dusky *caballeros* around him, and superior to nearly all of them in intelligence, besides being traveled and a foreigner. You more than probably soon hear of Don Roberto regaling himself in the first houses in town. There are, however, a number of negro families of great respectability, members of which have occupied seats in the Chamber of Deputies. It was one of these who, when the Inter-oceanic Rail-road Bill was passing the Senate, objected to the whole project on the ground that the entrance of Americans into the country would be the signal for the downfall of the colored race.

As regards health and robustness of person, the native of Eastern Honduras, though generally fleshy and well formed, is not constitutionally as well able to withstand any deleterious effect of the climate as under the same circumstances an American would be. This results mainly from the fruit and slops diet of the poorer classes, few being able to buy meat excepting in the great cattle districts of Olancho, where beef is the principal food. Yet they make the most patient and enduring sol-

diers in the world, traveling, as in the times of Morazan, twenty leagues a day through the mountains, and subsisting on boiled plantains. The couriers of the country *trot*, shod with leathern sandals, twenty leagues a day in all weathers. I often encountered these men in the lonely passes of the sierras, with a small packet of letters strapped to the back, jogging swiftly along at a gait between a fast walk and a run. They are always robust and well developed from constant exercise.

The system of couriers dates back to the times of the early Spaniards. A courier, whether private or government, passes through the country with perfect immunity from impressment or other impediment. Their calling is almost sacred, and whoever interferes with them is regarded as an offender against the public weal. They are universally honest. No record exists of a courier having robbed his employer, or surrendered the letters intrusted to his charge unless waylaid and intercepted by an enemy's force. At such times they have dexterous methods, known only to themselves, of concealing dispatches or documents. I have known a courier to start from Tegucigalpa with letters for Cojutepeque in San Salvador, perform his commission, and return with an answer in five days. They are the only mail facilities in all Central America. But the greater part of the population of Honduras are an indolent, listless class, setting no value upon time, taking little exercise except on horseback, and consequently soft and feeble in constitution.

With all the stillness of life in an interior town of Honduras, there is much to amuse the stranger. At table, my chair being placed near the grated window, on a level with the street, I would turn at hearing an earnest conversation and low breathing near me. The window would be blocked up with eager little brown, red, and black faces, gazing intently at "*el extranjero*," and commenting on my various motions. Sometimes I laughed outright, when the little imps would join in with a yell of delight, thrusting their noses through the gratings like monkeys. But these scenes became stale and uninteresting after a few weeks. The waving green and balmy breezes of the country soon satiate the appetite of an American. The eternal quiet, the empty streets, innocent, since the days of Alvarado, of the noise of a cart wheel, the grass growing along the paved



gutters, the high adobe walls and still gardens beyond, the lazy tolling of the church bells for mass, the slouch of the pedestrians, the listless gaze of the shop-keeper, seated idly on his counter, as you pass, and the total want of excitement, must, ere long, weary the man whose breath has been half taken away in the rush of events in California or the busy tramp of Broadway.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Traveling Preparations.—Mounted Caballeros.—The Bridge.—Scenes on the River.—Public Manners.—Gambling.—Begging.—Tailoring.—Cabañas on Horseback.—A Visit to the Cuartel.—Academia Literaria de Tegucigalpa.—An Examination.—A Ball in High Life.—Baptism.—Visit to the Mint.—A Honduras Guerrilla.—Fishing in the Rio Grande.—Meeting an American.—House Architecture.—Furniture.—Women of Honduras.—Passing Compliments.—Public Amusements.—Cock-fighting.

THE preparation for a journey in Honduras is attended with all the formalities of the olden time. The affair is talked over for a week, and the uninitiated, who, after hearing of the intended departure to-morrow, sees the supposed traveler still loitering about the streets, or swinging contentedly in his hammock a week afterward, at last learns that to propose and to act are entirely different matters in Central America. A person intending to leave for a distant part of the country will often delay his departure weeks for some trivial matter, such as a *dia de fiesta*, or the company of a friend on the road.

A number of *Salvadoreños* had arranged to start for San Miguel on a certain day, and, being desirous of sending letters there, I hastened to write and seal them in time for the bustling party, whose movements indicated an early departure on the following morning. I delivered my package, and exchanged formal *adios* with all, but on the ensuing day found them chatting unconcernedly in the different *tiendas*. Four weeks afterward they started in good earnest, the interim having been occupied in talking over the probable condition of the road, the last revolution, and the weather.

Early one morning, as I was returning from a refreshing swim in the river, I observed an unusual commotion in the *Calle de Concepcion*, and on approaching found my friends ready mount-

ed, and, at last, ready for their journey. At the door of a *tienda* stood the gray-headed Don P——, gazing with stupid pleasure upon the gallant equipage. A group of loiterers, attracted by the tramping of mules' hoofs on the pavement, lounged in every attitude around the scene of preparations. A dozen lightly-clad ladies, with heads enveloped in *mantillas*, peered anxiously from the surrounding windows, exchanging silent good-by's with departing friends or lovers. The narrow sidewalks were filled with acquaintances, nearly all pulling silently at their *cigarros*, and forming a remarkable contrast to a similar scene among Frenchmen, where the din would have been deafening. Here all was sedate and impassive. There were eight *caballeros*, each mounted on a costly *andadora* worth at least \$150. The trappings were silver-mounted, and some of the bridles and head-stalls adorned with plates of virgin silver hammered flat, and fastened with untanned leathern thongs. Each, as he mounted, which was done at a single step and with the utmost grace, curvetted about the street a while, to show the mettle of his animal; then, drawing his *serape* closely about his form, but with one hand protruding near the breast to allow the free use of the lighted *cigarro*, turned with a slight inclination and bow toward the ladies, and joined the group of horsemen near by.

No people ride better than the Hondureños; they force a mule into an agreeable and even graceful gait, when a novice would scarcely be able to make the beast carry him without exciting general laughter. Each horseman had his traveling servant, who, mounted on a stout *macho*, followed like Sancho Panza after his lord. Nearly an hour was spent in exchanging salutations and *buen viaje*, when, at the word of a bright, intelligent little fellow, who appeared to be the leader, they moved slowly out of the town, each endeavoring to exhibit some peculiar trait of horsemanship, in which the glittering sabre or silver-mounted pistol-holsters were but partially concealed in the folds of the *serape*. To dance and ride well is part of the Central American education; not to be excellent in both is the exception to the rule.

The view from the bridge of Tegucigalpa, spanning the Rio Grande, is an interesting one to the stranger. Here one may see a deal of life in Honduras. Most of the fruit and market-

ing from the surrounding mountains and the low plains beyond Comayaguella is brought into the city over this bridge. The work is a series of ten arches, surmounted by a causeway four varas in width and a hundred in length. It is constructed of sandstone, which works easily, but toughens on exposure to the air. The balustrade, which is four feet high, is of chiseled stone. The whole structure is massive, and decidedly Spanish in architecture. It is forty feet above the river, and of sufficient strength to admit the passage of a train of cars.

There is generally a fresh breeze from the mountains up the valley. Below, the water is alive with bathers, both in the morning and evening, shouting and plunging in the waves, some leading in mules to bathe or to drink, or swimming their horses into the deeper parts, and diving from the back of the animal. Here a crowd of boys tumble about in the rapid current like Sandwich Islanders; there, a decrepit old fellow, more like a baboon in shape than a human being, squatted on a rock, deliberately turns the pure element over himself with a gourd. For half a mile below the bridge the eye meets with groups of bathers of both sexes, dashing about in the foam, their joyous shouts blending finely with the roar of the waters.

The rare appearance of a foreigner in Tegucigalpa makes him rather uncomfortably a subject of speculation and remark as he passes through the streets. To return the numerous bows and "*buenos dias, caballero*," is, to an American, annoying, and at the same time amusing. Manners which would elsewhere be styled impertinences are here the simple customs of the place, and should be excused as such. They have a way of stopping near you when you are conversing with an acquaintance, listening with earnest innocence to your remarks. On a few occasions, when I attempted to stare the intruders out of countenance, and summoned all my *hauteur* for the occasion, I found them rather flattered by the notice, and perhaps smiling with inward satisfaction. "It is in the grain," thought I, and thenceforward did not attempt to deprive the street loungers of their time-honored prerogative. Secluded from the world, and rarely hearing news from abroad, any bit of information is considered by them fair game and public property.

The people, barring the dignified and over-courteous members

of the old and wealthy families, show a strange mixture of politeness, simplicity, shrewdness, and effrontery, and, above all, an indescribable passive indifference of face, which puzzles the foreigner, until, by long use, he becomes accustomed to it: stopping to peep into your window to scrutinize your toilet, and, encountering your eye as you turn round, making a bow worthy of Chesterfield; putting their houses and all in them at your "*disposition*," and ready to drive a Jew's bargain with you the next day, and so on to the end of the chapter. Like all Spanish or mongrel-Spanish people, they are great gamblers, and, while many have been ruined by this vice, few escape from its influence. This is bequeathed them by their ancestors; and, in regarding the idle habits of a large portion of the middle classes, we should be less disposed to censure from the fact that, the frequent revolutions preventing or destroying all attempts at agricultural improvement, and no public amusements presenting themselves, it is quite natural to fall into gaming as one of the few pastimes of the country. I often had seedy-looking gentlemen pointed out to me as victims to this fascination—men who, in former times, had ranked among the wealthiest in the vicinity. It is due to Honduras to say that the gambling done there is not a tithe of that of any of the other Central American states.

In one of the principal streets is a billiard saloon, very neatly furnished, but I saw no instance of skill or science displayed there.

Beggars are common. The stranger is their chief point of attack. "*Por el amor de Dios*," uttered in a lachrymose tone, comes to your ear when you least expect it. These are licensed to pursue their calling on Saturday, though they do not confine their solicitations to that day. On "begging-day" you are constantly besieged by the halt, maimed, and blind; and on one occasion I was surprised by the entrance of two soldiers leading a manacled prisoner, who had been allowed this method of improving his condition. His guard probably divided with him the day's earnings.

Another method is for an old woman to enter your house and seat herself in the corner, after quietly placing upon the table a bundle of paper cigars. If you are charitably disposed, you appropriate the cigars, and pay the silent petitioner whatever you



choose ; if not, having gazed five or ten minutes into vacancy without uttering a word, your visitor takes up her goods and departs. Such are the resorts of females reduced by misfortune to penury.

Another is equally ingenious, but prettier. While seated under the shade of the trees lining the *paseo* in Comayaguela, and conversing with some friends, an almost naked child ran to me from a neighboring hut with a bunch of flowers. Pleased with the gift, I thanked the little one, but, having no *reales* about me, could not reward her, and so thought no more of it. On the following day, walking over the bridge with Señor L——, a fawning fellow approached and held out his hand, at the same time bowing repeatedly and mumbling some compliments. He was so importunate that L—— somewhat roughly ordered him away.

The man stepped aside, and remarked, as he walked reluctantly off, that he was the father of the child who had presented the flowers the day before !

To illustrate the little value set upon time in Honduras : Some days after my arrival, finding it necessary to have some thin clothing made, I sent for a tailor. A fat, smiling, over-polite personage entered, hat in hand, and took my measure, promising the articles on the next day. He was more than my match in politeness, and backed, bowing and smiling, out of the house. For a week I encountered him every day in the street, and once during that time he came to Señor Losano's and played us a number of brisk tunes on the guitar. Ten days passed away, and there was always some excuse for the non-appearance of the clothes. As one has first to buy the cloth before the tailor takes it in hand, I began to feel uneasy as to the original investment, and ventured to consult Don Jose Maria. " Oh, that is nothing," said he ; " I have often waited a month for a coat ; we never hurry in Tegucigalpa : even the President must wait the pleasure of the shoemaker and tailor." On the fifteenth day, and when I had begun to despair, I sent my boy to the house of Señor *Sastre*, who promised them faithfully for the morrow, and by again sending for them a week afterward I secured my new clothes. These were the last I had made in the country, for more reasons than one.

Upon one occasion I was awakened early by a message from the government house, with an invitation to join a number of gentlemen, among whom was the President, in a *pasao d caballo*. We returned after an hour's ride through some of the most interesting of the environs. During this jaunt I had an opportunity of observing the graceful horsemanship of Cabañas. He sits his horse firmly and easily, and there is about the venerable soldier an air of calm dignity, which, in a less secluded theatre of action, would attract instant notice. We entered the *cuartel* or barracks, where the governor of the place is quartered. The lounging sentinel assumed an upright position, and presented arms as we passed. At the entrance were several rows of brightly-burnished muskets, of English make; such were, indeed, nearly all the arms I saw in public use in Central America. All had flint locks and bayonets.

The men were mostly stout fellows, dressed in a simple uniform of white drilling, with red stripes on the legs of the pantaloons. All were barefooted. Some were sleeping on the rough wooden benches of the arena, others were gambling, drinking, or buying a sort of confectionery of sugar and cocoanut from an old woman who carried it about in a basket. They arose and sprang to present arms as the old general entered. In an inner room we saw about forty muskets, mostly out of repair, a number of boxes of bullets, an old field-piece, with a three-inch calibre, and mounted on a carriage with wheels like those of a heavy dray. We were shown, with great pride, a howitzer, one of six sold to the government by the Rail-road Company, and a few rifles. None of these weapons had yet been used in the battles of the country, there being but one man in the army who understood the use of artillery, and he had hitherto been reluctant to handle the howitzers, owing to their great bore, and the *consequent danger of bursting!* On returning to the house, Cabañas showed me a Sharp's rifle, presented to him by Mr. Edwards.

Among other invitations which I received was one to attend the examination of a student, a candidate for Bachelorship in *La Academia Literaria de Tegucigalpa*, an institution organized some years since under the auspices of Cabañas. There was also to be a ball in the evening, in honor of the graduate,

at the house of his father, one of the wealthiest citizens of the place, and residing in the *Plaza de Paroquia*. The name of the young aspirant was Juan Verancio Lardizabal.

At five o'clock, in company with a few friends, in full dress for the occasion, I entered the University, situated in the Plaza de Santo Domingo, where were already assembled numbers of the friends of the family, who seemed to take a lively interest in the success of the candidate. The throng, which was of all colors, from white through the intermediate shades to black, having deposited their hats without, all entered the examination-room—a hall about 50 by 40, filled with desks, and adorned with historical pictures. At the upper end was erected a platform, on which were chairs and tables, the last covered with red cloth, books, and writing materials. A silken or damask canopy was erected, under which were seated President Cabañas, Cacho, Minister of Finance, and the Padres Matute and Reyes, the most noted literary dignitaries of the country. These were the umpires in the examination, which was actually conducted by several Bachelors of the University, whose duty seemed to be the puzzling of the candidate with abstruse questions in metaphysics, philosophy, and religion. In a sort of pulpit near by was seated Don Maximo Soto, a young lawyer of great promise, supposed to be the “champion” of the candidate, and having the privilege of answering for him the more difficult questions. The audience occupied the sides and aisles of the room, and the pupils of the institution, numbering some thirty, the body. Behind the President’s chair was a coarse painting representing an aspiring student rushing up the steps of the Temple of Learning and Fame, in which stood Minerva holding toward him a package of books! The background was somewhat indistinct, among clouds of glory and rays of light striking from them upon the head of the goddess. It was the work of a pupil of the institution.

The examination lasted nearly an hour, being conducted in turn by the graduates. When the Padre Reyes rang his bell it signified his satisfaction, and that the next graduate could commence. No questions were asked in the usual branches of a common education. If the student was properly “up” in his religious notions, he was not subjected to many puzzling cate-

gories. At this academy many of the future padres of Honduras will receive their education. At the end of each series of questions the listeners applauded, and finally, tickets having been distributed among the examiners, they deposited them in a box, and, the returns being counted, the Padre Reyes declared the young man a graduate of the University, amid loud "vivas" and clapping of hands.

This academy (occupying a portion of the old convent of San Francisco, built in 1574) was established in 1847. It is sustained by the levying of a special tax and by private contribution. It is the first, and, with the exception of a recently-established one in Comayagua, the only one in the republic. The students are divided into six classes. It is under the direction of the Church, which monopolizes the guidance of educational matters. Nearly all the scholars are candidates for the clergy.

The examination over, the company formed into procession and walked to the Plaza, where, at the door of Señor Lardizabal, we found that gentleman awaiting our arrival. It is the custom on such occasions for the entertainer to stand thus, welcoming his guests one by one as they arrive. I availed myself of my note of introduction, with the view of ascertaining to what extent the inhabitants of this out-of-the-way little mountain city had carried the arts of social parties. I had understood that this was to be an unusually exclusive affair, and a type of elegant manners in Tegucigalpa. Entering a spacious corridor, we were ushered into the *sala* of the Lardizabals, brilliantly lighted. The room was paved, as usual, with square tiles, and the ceiling and walls handsomely painted, like those of the better houses in Havana. Wreaths of lace and colored fringed paper, like those seen in the confectioners' shops in New York during the summer months, hung around the room, showing the handiwork of the young ladies of the house, who evidently prided themselves on their taste in these matters. On the left side, as we entered, were sitting some two dozen ladies of the aristocracy, most of them handsome, a few beautiful, and all apparently graceful.

They remained seated as the throng of visitors entered, but received graciously the salutations of all. T—— ran the gauntlet with me, and assisted in executing the rather ridiculous



formalities demanded by the occasion. In the centre of the *sala* was a table covered with confectionery, wines, chocolate, and cool drinks, and from the ceiling was suspended a chandelier, borrowed especially for the occasion from an enterprising neighbor, who had ordered it from Truxillo. The ceremonies of presentation over, the gentlemen ranged themselves opposite the ladies, and henceforth, until the dancing, there was a rigid separation of the sexes. Each side maintained a spirited conversation, interspersed with loud laughter, the only communication between the two sides of the room being by ocular telegraph: bright eyes and fans were the instruments used. Cigars were freely discussed, both *cigarros* proper and *puros*, of which a tastefully-constructed pyramid was built upon the table. The *cigarros* or *cigarettos* of paper were the preference of the ladies, who held them daintily between the prettiest of fingers, and puffed away, gesticulating with the greatest animation with these little meteors, and not once was the romance of the thing destroyed by an instance of expectoration.

After half an hour passed in this manner, the master of the house, acting as his own waiter in company, with several members of the family, handed about ready-filled glasses of Champagne, this custom being always preferred to the certain annoyance of employing servants, whose splay feet and *dishabille* would surely destroy all elegance that might attach to the party. As is usual on Champagne occasions, the popping of corks added to the conversational powers of the party, and the room was speedily in a buzz. Señora R——z was now called on by numerous admirers for a song. An overdressed, paunchy gentleman took a guitar, seated himself directly before her, and, after a few preliminary twangs, the music commenced.

The singing was the best I had yet heard in the country, but was made up of that drawling tone peculiar to the voices of all Central American vocalists. The attempts of Spanish-Americans at the sentimental always verges upon or oversteps the line of the melancholy; the look, tone, all is decidedly *sorrowful*. I never yet heard a lively song in Central America except among the country people. Whether this is owing to the depression consequent upon the sad state of political affairs I could never decide. There lacks cultivation in all the musical at-

tempts I have heard, even the best. Taste is not wanting, but the style is almost unpleasant to foreigners. The song was loudly applauded, as at a public concert, every body shouting aloud and clapping hands. Meantime, the throng of "the unwashed" peered unrebuked through the bars of the street windows, and joined in the applause with audible characteristic comments, such as "*Que hermosa !*" "*Que voz tan pura !*" and an occasional yell of approbation. This standing at the doors and windows is the acknowledged prerogative of the multitude.

The lady of General Morazan performed a selection from Linda on a Coulard & Coulard piano, when, after the applause had subsided, the room was cleared for the ball. By this time the restraints had begun to disappear before the effects of Champagne, and the Padre Ugarte, "a little, round, fat, oily man of God," having seated himself at the piano, the whole room was quickly engaged in that amusement which to the Spanish race is more than second nature.

If the formalities of conversation had imparted a stiffness to the scene until now, certain it is that never a merrier throng mingled in the whirl of the dizzy waltz. It is rare to find an indifferent waltzer among the ladies of Central America. They are generally easy and lithe in their motions, sailing through the dance with rather a stately though animated mien, but without the slightest approach to a hop. The men danced well, with few exceptions. Cotillons followed, and, indeed, all the fashionable dances but polkas, which are not in vogue here.

During the evening I was several times agreeably surprised at hearing some of the waltzes of the day brilliantly performed by various ladies. The only instructor in Tegucigalpa is a German, who is fearfully cherished by his pupils. At midnight, the ball growing tedious, and the formalities verging into rather affectionate demonstrations, owing to the exciting nature of the refreshments upon sundry gay gentlemen, we took leave of our worthy entertainer, his lady, and the national dignitaries present. Most of the élite had already taken their departure. A band of dusky musicians had been introduced at the latter part of the evening, and now, as the night was a starry one, perambulated the streets until dawn, setting all the dogs of the city in an uproar with their brazen instruments.

A baptism is one of the important ceremonies of the Church. Several occurred while I was at Tegucigalpa, at some of which I was present. The padre being prepared a day or two before, the church is decorated under his directions, and on the baptismal day the mother appears surrounded by her friends. As they enter the sacred portals the choir commences a chant, accompanied by clarionets, bass viols, violins, and the asthmatic organ. A crowd usually gathers about, some to gaze at the procession, others to congratulate the mother. After the ceremonies, the bells of the church are beaten by the *campaneros* for the space of five minutes, the priests raise their voices, the band of musicians redouble their exertions, and several youngsters, who have been impatiently awaiting the signal, fire a double string of *bombas* stretched across the entrance to the church. As the flaming train delivers the report, the crowd rushes forward, shouting and kicking recklessly among the cracking torpedoes. The number of these explosive testimonials depends upon the wealth and importance of the family of the child. The remainder of the day is devoted to feasting.

The Mint at Tegucigalpa is a fair illustration of the reign of terror which, in successive administrations, has blighted the prosperity of Honduras. My old friend, Don Jose Ferrari, a naturalized Italian, is the director. By his invitation I visited the establishment, which is a portion of the *cuartel* building. The machinery is simple and rude, consisting of a perpendicular screw, on the lower part of which is affixed a stamp of the coin intended to be made. A horizontal bar passes through the upper part, forming two levers, or handles, like capstan bars. A couple of blacks were alternately setting up and unscrewing this bit of mechanism, a copper coin, of the value of a cent, dropping out at each heave. The rim of the coin is made by an equally simple process. The room was bare, dark, and silent; the walls shrouded with cobwebs and black with dirt. On a table near the coining apparatus were heaped up several thousand bright pieces of copper money, in which, as Don Jose informed me, was a considerable percentage of silver, the exact amount of which he is prohibited from divulging.

In an adjoining room were the remnants of some valuable coining machinery, of English manufacture, made under the di-

rection of Morazan. Amid the turmoils of the country, the mule-train bearing it to Tegucigalpa from Omoa was waylaid by the opposite party, and the apparatus thrown upon the road, where it lay for months subjected to the weather. Some years afterward it was brought to its place of destination, but utterly ruined. The material is now piled up in inextricable confusion; some of the copper boilers filled with grease, and others melted into coin. Señor F—— lamented this, but wisely refrained from denouncing any particular persons in these days of revolutionary changes. “Ah!” said he, “I well remember when this machinery was first landed at Omoa: you might have shaved yourself by it, it was so beautifully polished.” It is now a mass of rusty and broken iron, piled into the dark corners, covered with rubbish and cobwebs, and the fit home of venomous insects.

It was the intention of Morazan to have coined all the money necessary for the country with this, and then to have bought up the copper currency, which at that time had not accumulated in such quantities as now. At every step the traveler hears of some praiseworthy act of Morazan. With his murder in Costa Rica, Central America has been gradually but surely declining, soon to become the inheritance of strangers. Part of this machinery is yet at Omoa. Señor Ferrari showed us, with great pride, a set of books kept by himself and son, which he stated were the first ever used in the establishment. About \$10,000 in copper is annually coined at the Mint of Tegucigalpa.

While here I was introduced to the famous Colonel Rubi, whose *guerrilla* exploits have made him the terror of the *Guatemaltecos*. He was dressed in officer's uniform. His air was gentle, almost sad, but the mouth wore an expression of determination and resolute courage not often seen in the soft features of the Central American. He was small in stature; his diminutive hands and feet a lady might have envied; and, what is rare in this country, he had blue eyes and light hair. There is also an indescribable look of cruelty about the thin lips. Having failed in a revolution originated by him in Guatemala, he escaped to Honduras, and, enlisting under Cabañas, was regarded by the old general as his best officer. He was allowed his own way, and, with a sort of roving commission on land, generally made



sudden descents on the unsuspecting enemy, from which he invariably came off victor. His name is a terror on the borders of Gracias. His adventures, which are well authenticated, would make an interesting volume. It is said that Rubi has sworn the death of Carrera, President of Guatemala, for injuries done his family some years since.

Excellent fish are sometimes brought into the market of Tegucigalpa, taken from the Rio Grande or some of its tributaries. Among these are a species of brook trout (*mojarras*), dace, and a fish resembling the perch, called the "guapote." About three leagues northeast of the city is an artificial lake four hundred yards square, constructed by the Comayaguela Indians for purposes of irrigation. Some fish placed by them in this pond so increased in a few years that several citizens of Tegucigalpa went there for angling purposes. A superstition existed among the Indians that the lake and its denizens were under the special protection of their patron saint. Much against their will, the fish were caught, and on the ensuing summer the country was afflicted with a severe drought. A deputation was sent to Tegucigalpa, demanding that double the number of fish should be restored, and a hundred candles burned at the expense of the city, to appease the wrath of the saint. The money was raised by subscription, and the lake restocked by fish brought from the Rio Grande amid the rejoicings of *Los Comayaguelas*. The river yields a large variety, and I determined on one occasion to try my fortunes.

In company with Santiago, one of Don Jose Maria's servants, I repaired to a noted fishing spot called *La Piedra Grande*, a mile below the city. The river here flows between two high hills, wooded to their tops, and, gathering itself up for the leap between the ledges of a narrow pass, throws itself noisily down in a succession of rapids sparkling in snow-white foam. Some yards below this is a deep, silent space of water, bearing on its surface the bubbles created by the turmoil above. The depth is some thirty feet, and is called by the natives *El Pozo*, or the hole. The operation of fishing here consists merely in baiting and throwing the hook into the stream, the angler seated on a rock or under the shade of some waving tree. The Waltonian art is little known here, or indeed in any part of Central Amer-

ica. Until recently, the inhabitants of Virgin Bay, Granada, and Amapala have almost deprived themselves of the luxury of fresh fish rather than be at the trouble of taking them.

A few minutes' walk carried us beyond the *barrios* of the city, and, arriving at *El Pozo*, we scrambled out upon a ledge of rocks and let down our lines, but from some cause our efforts were not crowned with success. Santiago said they bit better on feast-days, a stretch of religious imagination I did not attempt to combat. After an hour's trial, in which the bait was feloniously abstracted from our hooks some twenty times, thereby heightening the excitement, we concluded that the saints had interdicted the catching of fish on Sunday, and, reeling up our lines, we followed the stream up to where a miracle is said to have been performed. Here the Virgin is stated to have deposited the image of a saint, to whom it was proposed to erect a church.

The scenery was of that kind constantly occurring to delight and charm the stranger. A clean sandy beach on each side, the water pure and clear, the banks lined with the *amate*, *guapinole*, *guajiniquilé*, and many other wide-spreading trees, a light breeze stealing among the sunlit foliage, a wall of tropical green bounding the view on every side, in which "many a plummy thing sitting within the stillness" are the only witnesses of your wanderings; then the sparkle of the rapids above, just visible through the leaves; the solemn clang of the church bells, wafted faintly down the ravine from the city, and carrying the imagination to the New England village meeting-house, and the well-remembered peal of its old belfry tenant. Honduras abounds in such quiet resorts for the angler.

I was one day seated in my hammock, conning over a late *Gaceta de Guatemala*, when a loud laugh, entirely the reverse of the subdued Central American snicker, accompanied by a few oaths in indisputable English, showed that I was not the only American in Tegucigalpa. I had hardly time to step to the door before a hearty, robust gentleman met me with a sudden grasp of the hand, and introduced himself as Dr. W——. "Heavens!" said I, "another doctor! God help the sick!" He had just arrived from Comayagua and Omoa, and was now *en route* for Nicaragua. We were friends at once, and began com-

paring notes in our own language, much to the amusement of Don Jose Maria, who turned from one to the other as we chatted, gravely nodding assent to our remarks, of which he did not understand a word, and joining sympathetically in our laughter.

The doctor had been some months in the country, and, on learning of my intended visit to Olancho, promised to make the journey with me if I would await his speedy return from Nicaragua. He had long contemplated a trip to the Guayape region, and believed it one of the richest gold countries in the world. My companion was one of those roving adventurers who, striking away from the noise of cities, love to penetrate unknown and distant countries. Thus he had visited most of the South American republics with no other view than a desire to see the world, paying his way with his good company and box of "*remedios*," which, in the hands of a foreigner, is always a passport to the good graces of these people. He kept me shaking with laughter until night, when he took his departure, and I never saw him again. He started before dawn on the following morning for Leon. His life among the Dons formed a rich series of laughable adventures, in which women, fighting, "doctoring," dancing, and the vicissitudes of sierra life were freely intermingled. It is difficult to penetrate a country too secluded for an American doctor, peddler, or Daguerrean artist, or to enter a port, however retired, in which an American trading vessel has not cast anchor before.

Glass windows are almost unknown in Honduras, and the warmth of the temperature seems to render their use unnecessary. Their place is somewhat supplied by iron bars across the opening. The casement, formed like an embrasure or loop-hole of a fort, and beveling inward, is commonly paved with stone below, the upper part and sides plastered and whitewashed. The tiled floors, when swept clean and washed, impart an air of coolness to the dark rooms, and on entering, after a ride through the dust and heat, you find yourself inclosed within six sides of a square stone box. The lumber, such as joist and boards, used in the construction of the house, is sawed out by hand. The pine of the mountain regions is straight-grained and works easily. Closets, cupboards, and commodious affairs of this kind are seldom used in dwelling-houses. An American lady visit-

ing Honduras would find this among the many deprivations; and in the few, but spacious rooms, there is little privacy for any body.

The excess of furniture found in our dwellings would be out of place and useless in Central America. The bed-rooms are, of course, on the ground floor, and in these the only articles are the bedstead, one or oftener two chairs, and sometimes a wooden "*guardaropa*," or clothes-press. But in the houses of the wealthier families, and where several ladies are residing, the rooms throughout are somewhat more profusely furnished. The lack of servants with enough taste or intelligence to keep furniture in order, added to the natural indisposition of *la se-ñora* herself to the duties of housekeeping, contribute to maintain the primitive method of living. I was credibly informed that in Honduras, as well as Nicaragua, the use of the knife and fork has not been many years adopted.

I believe that every traveler in Central America will testify to the generous, noble-hearted character of the women. Hospitable, gentle, and patient, upon them falls a large share of the work done in the five states. Some one has remarked that it may be said of the Central American women, "She nursed, made tortillas, and died." This, of course, does not apply to the ladies of the wealthy families. The females of the lower orders are, in fact, the slaves of the country. In Tegucigalpa the water used for all the purposes of life is brought by them from the river, a distance of a hundred feet up a steep bank, whence I have often observed their painful progress and heavy breathing. Excepting in politics and war, which have ruined Central America, they seem to carry the greater part of the burdens of life, but, cheerful and happy, they are ever contented with their station. I can not remember hearing a rough or rude word from any woman of the country. Their manner is frank and light-hearted, and the tired stranger is readily welcomed to their family board. I always made a point, on my arrival at a house, of ingratiating myself with its mistress.

The passing of formal compliments, a relic of the old Spaniard, is gradually decreasing. Every body has some idea of politeness, not only among the higher, but in the lowest walks of life. The dirtiest rascalion, *sin zapatos*, uses his courtliest



language in addressing you, and seems imbued with an inborn sense of courtesy. The best-bred gentlemen I have met in any country I saw among the educated persons of Honduras. Good-breeding, urbanity, and a desire to make one's self agreeable to the company is a leading feature. Wrangling and disputing in society is almost unknown; and if an addition to the party occurs, every person in the room arises to receive him.

These are not general remarks formed from a few instances, but will apply to what is known as good society in Honduras, or at least in Tegucigalpa, and renders a *reunion* of gentlemen a scene to be remembered, and even favorably contrasted with the turbulent discussions often taking place in what is termed polished society in communities who doubtless regard their tropical neighbors of Honduras as semi-civilized.

Public amusements are almost unknown in Honduras. Theatres, museums, games, excursions, hunting-parties, are means of entertainment as yet only known by hearsay. The *funciones* of the Church create an occasional religious enthusiasm, and then the *patio de gallos* becomes the centre of attraction. This pastime amounts to a passion, and is a source of revenue to the government. The privilege of establishing a cockpit during certain religious festivals is let out by the authorities to the highest bidder, who having made the requisite preparations, the yard is thrown open to the public, and a barefooted soldier being stationed as door-keeper, the multitude is admitted for a charge of two copper reals a head; all minors being excluded by law, and the master of the cockpit being liable to a fine for every person so admitted.

The games commence at the *Pascua* (December 25th), and usually continue until the latter part of March. The established regulations are posted at the door-way, and a judge appointed *viva voce* to decide in all disputes. As high as \$1000 is often bet upon the fights, and the people arrive at the greatest excitement during these exhibitions. The sport is not considered as detracting from the dignity of the highest officials, and the padres in clerical garb may be seen venturing a handful of *pesos* on one of two feathered combatants, or disputing lustily on the merits of different birds with the most boisterous of the crowd. The custom has descended from the early Spaniards,

and no urchin in our own country ever looked forward to Thanksgiving or Christmas more eagerly than do the Tegucigalpans count the days to "*tiempo de gallos*."

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## CHAPTER XII.

Tardy Officials.—A Visit to a Hacienda de Caña.—Flour-mill.—Buildings.—Distillery.—Sugar-mill.—Honduras Cane.—Fruit.—Cassava.—Yuca.—Making Starch.—Sweet Potato.—Chili Peppers.—Contrayerba.—Productions of the Department.—A Dinner at *El Sitio*.—El Comojen.—El Diario de Marina.—An Evening Scene.—*Las Tienderas*.—Shops.—Trade.—Fashions.—Dresses.—Ladies of Honduras.—Female Beauty.—Equestrianism.—Lack of Education.—Children's Dresses.—Political Matters.—Jose Francisco Barrundia.—The Death Penalty.—Security in Traveling.

Two commissioners were appointed to take into consideration my petition to the government. These were the Padre Reyes, a leading politician of Honduras, and Señor Vigil, well known as an adherent of the Conservative party. My documents once in their hands, I saw nothing more of them for many days. Their duties in relation to them would have occupied any but Spaniards perhaps two hours. I was all impatience to renew my mountain journey toward Jutecalpa. For several days I made a point of visiting both of these worthies, keeping constantly on their track, and never failing to remind them of their duties. Sometimes I found them lounging on a shop counter, gravely conversing with the *tiendero*, or, wrapped in cloaks, smoking *cigarros* and gazing at vacancy, silent and imperturbable. Twice I found the reverend father playing monte in a small gambling-house, with a greater display of eagerness in his countenance than I had thought him capable of. He always returned any hint I might give him with a stare of wonder at such indecent haste as eminently un-Spanish and out of the ordinary routine of business. Every day convinced me that time, so invaluable to Americans, is here considered as an institution got up expressly to be passed as easily as possible, and an article of no value. It is never taken into account in any bargain or calculation, and he is considered as displaying a want of diplomatic dignity who attempts to outstrip the tardy motions transmitted from "good old colony times."

Finding it useless to "hurry up" my commissioners, and resolving to float with the tide rather than struggle against it, I passed some weeks very agreeably visiting the silver mines in this department, and riding, at the invitation of proprietors, to the haciendas in the vicinity.

My old friend, Señor Ferrari, had often pressed me to visit his *hacienda de caña*, known as El Sitio, about two leagues from Tegucigalpa, on the road to Cantaranos. Late one evening he called, and promised to send his favorite *macho* (a beautiful animal worth \$200) for me on the following morning. At daylight I mounted, and rode to the house, where I found the old Don ready spurred and awaiting my arrival. After coffee we set off toward Santa Lucia. Don Jose took the lead with his *andadora*, and, leaving the town, led the way through a mountainous district, sometimes crossing fertile valleys, and at others along the banks of the Rio Chiquito, taking its rise in the San Juan mountains six leagues southeast of the city. Some old chronicles in Tegucigalpa speak of this stream as "*El Rio de Oro*," but I could not learn that any gold had been found in its sands to warrant the name. We passed numerous thrifty *ranchos*, devoted mainly to the cultivation of corn and vegetables, and sugar-cane was growing in small patches on two or three of the largest. An invigorating breeze fanned our faces as we passed rapidly up the valley. On the blue mountains surrounding us we could discern among the clouds square patches of cultivated ground, which my companion said were wheat-fields.

We soon opened a green-carpeted little gorge, in which Don Jose pointed out the first flour-mill I had seen in the country. This is kept in active operation after harvest-time. It is carried by the waters of the Chiquito, which here tumbles merrily along to where it joins the Rio Grande at Tegucigalpa. Crossing this valley, and winding along the edge of a precipitous hill, my companion stopped and bade me listen to a distant screeching and shouting, which he said proceeded from the *muchachos* on his *hacienda*, engaged in grinding cane. A moment more, and the estate itself appeared to view. The old Don now grew doubly loquacious respecting his possessions, and, withal, I could not help thinking he was justly proud of them. He is owner

of eighty *caballarias*, and the plantation extended over all the arable land in sight. We drew up at the end of an avenue of fruit-trees, and I was introduced to the mayor-domo, the eldest son of the proprietor.

A description of this hacienda will answer for any large and well-ordered one in the state. The buildings, which are all of adobe, consist of a dwelling-house containing six rooms on the ground floor, four smaller ones occupied by the laborers, two store-houses, and a distillery. The principal dwelling was neatly tiled, in good repair, and surrounded by a corridor paved with stone. Every thing about the place betokened a thrifty, wealthy owner. The distillery contained some English machinery, brought on mule-back over the mountains from Fonseca Bay. In the sugar-house adjoining was a mill made in the country. It consisted of a series of mahogany rollers revolving reversely, between which, the ends of the cane being inserted, the bunches were drawn through and the juice pressed out. The boilers were of copper. The method of sugar-making practiced here does not materially differ from that of Cuba, save that fewer modern improvements have been introduced. The majority of manufactories, however, are scarcely better than the rude inventions of the early settlers.

Sugar-cane grows without replanting twenty consecutive years in Honduras. It is of an excellent quality, attains a remarkable height, and is capable of being manufactured into the best sugar known. No refining process has ever yet been used in the state. The hacienda was completely surrounded with luxuriant trees, many of them bearing fruits of which to taste of each would induce satiety. An orange-grove near the house was literally loaded with the yellow burden, and the ground beneath covered with over-ripe ones. Here were also a number of peach-trees, set out by the proprietor as an experiment. *Pine-apples, sweet limes, cocoanuts, plantains, bananas, figs, melons, and apricots* flourish on this, as well as other haciendas in the sierra.

A field of *casava* was growing near the house, and forming, with its smooth, oblong leaves, bristling stalk, and bright-hued flowers, a beautiful ornament in a small landscape. It reaches a height of three feet in the uplands, but nearly six in the low coun-



try of San Salvador and Nicaragua. Some plants I afterward saw growing in the valley of Talanga, in Eastern Honduras, were above five feet high. There are several wild plants closely resembling the *casava*, some of whose leaves are gathered and dried for their medicinal properties. These are like those of the *papaya*; the seeds, in times of scarcity, are gathered to feed poultry; but the *casava* proper is the root, which is not unlike a long, thin yam, and, when boiled, is white, tasteless, and nearly like the potato. It is taken from the ground at all seasons. The starch of the country is obtained exclusively from the *casava* and *yuca*, a species of the same. The *yuca*, however, is a larger plant, and has often a stout stalk reaching eight or ten feet from the ground. It is in blossom and yields fruit throughout the year. The root is dried, and tied into bundles of two or three pounds, which are sold in all the market-places at a *medio* each. Properly dried, it may be preserved for years. From this plant tapioca is made.

The starch is obtained by scraping the peeled *casava* into delicate strings, which are squeezed by hand in a stout cloth. A glutinous substance oozes out, which, mixed with water and boiled to a proper consistency, becomes a clear, pearly starch, equal to any manufactured article I have ever seen. That produced from the *yuca* is considered the best. In the mountains, where the modern improvements have not found their way, the root is simply pounded, jammed, and boiled, the starch remaining in the bottom of the vessel. In the larger towns, shirts are returned from the hands of the *lavadoras* as neatly starched and ironed as the most fastidious critic could desire; but the method of washing, which consists of beating the saturated clothes upon rocks, leaves the owner of the articles but little hope of ever again seeing his garments except in tatters, and bereft of buttons. The *yuca* plant bears red and white flowers.

Here I also observed the sweet potato, an esculent common in all parts of Central America. It, however, flourishes best in Nicaragua. April is the season for planting, but, where the ground can be irrigated, it may be raised the year round. The mode of culture does not differ from that of the Southern United States. The yield is often very large; the potato of an oval shape, and of a whitish appearance. The vines grow luxuri-

antly. In the markets of the principal towns sweet potatoes are worth about two cents a pound; but in most of the small villages, especially in the mountains, are not to be obtained at any price. The scarcity of this, as well as of many other productions of the country, was owing to the ravages of the grasshoppers, which, passing in innumerable millions over the country during my visit, had destroyed many of the finest fields.

Chili peppers were also flourishing in dozens of localities about El Sitio. They grow equally well in a wild state. The *Chili Colorado*, or oblong pod of the red pepper, is known the world over to Spaniards. It is eaten by the swarthy mountaineer of Central America with *tortillas*, as cheese is in the North. I could never see a brawny fellow munching red peppers and tortillas without having my eyes filled with involuntary tears. None but a Spanish throat could ever acquire the knack of bolting them. This, with the garlic, is an ingredient in nearly every dish. The round or sweet pepper is also found growing wild in the country, but is not so generally liked as the first. A tough, bitter root, known there as the *Contrayerba*, grows in the neighborhood of El Sitio. Some curious medicinal qualities are attributed to it, for which purpose it is sold in the *Plaza de Mercado* of Tegucigalpa to women. The specimens of this plant now in New York are pronounced by botanists the *Dorstenia* of Linnæus.

In the Department of Tegucigalpa are cultivated nearly all of the tropical products, and in the highest land some of those of the temperate. Among these may be mentioned tobacco of excellent quality, rice, sugar, cacao, a little indigo, all the tropical fruits, corn, potatoes, and coffee. Juarros mentions Tegucigalpa, or Eastern Honduras, as the richest section of Central America for gold and silver.

There are found among the wild productions, in small quantities, vanilla, gum arabic, fustic, mastic, ipecacuanha, dragon's blood, ginger, tamarinds, and the India-rubber tree. As these are also common to the eastern coast of Honduras, in the great department of Olancho, which should be considered as a distinct subdivision of Central America, I shall refer to them and other natural products in my description of that country. Olancho proper is equal in size to the Republic of San Salvador, and,

being the object of my journey, I paid closer attention to its agricultural and mineral resources than to those of any other portion of the state through which I passed.

Señor Ferrari had visited Olancho some twelve years since, where he has an old relative living. He promised me a number of letters of introduction, and laughed at the warnings of Cabañas. "They are the richest and most hospitable people in the country," said the old man, "and with a letter in your hand from me you need not fear to pass current among them; only do not mix too freely among the Indians." After a long ramble among the neighboring hills, during which my entertaining host loaded me with information about the country, we returned to the house, where I found a sumptuous dinner prepared, and graced with the fair presence of the Don's four daughters, who had followed us out from the city for that purpose. The blending of the flashing Spanish beauty with that of the voluptuous Italian, all heightened by the flush of exercise, and set off by decidedly neat gray riding-habits, made the company of my hospitable friends an agreeable surprise.

After dinner we had coffee, cigars, guitars, and an animated conversation on female fashions in North America. The curiosity, if not jealousy, of my fair companions had recently been aroused by the arrival from New York of their cousins, the Señoritas Dardano, who had passed through Tegucigalpa some two months since. The flutter caused by their advent, and the millinery art, now for the first time *realized* by these secluded belles, had not yet subsided. I doubt not that my descriptions of splendid Broadway have caused more than one of Tegucigalpa's beauties to sigh for the establishment of rail-roads and steamboats between Honduras and "*el Norte*."

Nearly every building in Honduras is subject to the destructive agency of a little boring insect called the *Comojen*. They enter at the lower part of house timbers, and eat a perfectly round hole to the top, whence they return by a parallel route, continuing their operation until every beam, rafter, and joist in the building is honeycombed. Cedar is particularly liable to these attacks. At *El Sitio*, though the wood, to all outward appearance, was sound, Don Jose showed me its true condition by taking a pole and striking vigorously upon the rafters.

They crushed in like the shell of a mummy, and flew into little clouds of dust, from which the ladies made a rapid retreat out of doors. There are but few kinds of pine wood in the country which are not subject to the attacks of the *comojen*, and it is a singular coincidence that any but these two woods will become worm-eaten and decay in water within twelve months. An instance was related to me by an English gentleman, formerly engaged in mining in Yuscaran, near the boundary of Nicaragua. A large pine-tree was cut for a shaft for a crushing mill, and carried a distance of two miles to the works. Before the tree was felled, a number of the old natives warned them against cutting that class of pine, predicting its speedy decay. The foreigners, considering this a silly superstition, gave it no attention, and after eight months' use the shaft, which was costly and apparently sound, became perforated with small round holes, and finally unfit for use. Similar "superstitions" exist as to cutting trees during the full of the moon. No one in Honduras cuts a tree for building purposes except at that time and the week following. Insects attack timber cut before the full moon, while it is known by experience they will not touch that felled a week after. These facts may be useful to future settlers in Honduras.

In an old clothes-press in the *sala* I found a file of *El Diario de Marina* of Havana. This is the only foreign newspaper regularly reaching the interior of the state. As its rabid and anti-American leaders have been repeatedly transcribed and spread before the people since the Lopez expedition, any respect that may yet remain in certain sections of Honduras for the United States is not owing to "*El Diario de Marina*."

After swinging in lazy hammocks, smoking corn-husk cigars, drinking *vino de coyol* and *tiste*, and gathering all the fruit it was reasonable to suppose could be eaten in a week, we ordered our mules, and bade adieu to *El Sitio*. We rode slowly and easily toward the old city, the ladies chatting gayly on the events of the day, and laughing with the ease of youthful and unburdened hearts. Beautiful *El Sitio*! the quiet shades of its lawn of *guanacastes* and *ceibas*, the fragrance of its orange and citron groves, the sparkle of its brawling brook, tumbling among the leafy thickets, its beautiful birds, and the dreamy



silence in which nature seems here enthroned, will long haunt my memory.

We reached the summit of the hills overlooking the city just in time to catch the last rays of sunset, bathing the turrets of La Paroquia in purple light, and illumining the houses in the valley beneath. The faint tones of the old Spanish bells floated toward us in the evening breeze. They have summoned the devout to prayers since the seventeenth century, when the followers of Alvarado lifted their plumed hats and listened to the lofty *Te Deum*. Gradually the twilight deepened over the landscape; the crimson clouds, casting their reflected hues over the mountains, grew dim before the gray mantle of evening; and, urging forward our animals, we were soon ambling through the paved streets of the city, and exchanging "*buenas noches*" with the groups at the doorways.

The stores in the large towns of Honduras are stocked with nearly the same class of goods. A description of one, with a few alterations regarding size and the disposition of articles, would answer for the whole. Rows of shelves surround the shop, in the centre of which, behind the counter, the master, or oftener the mistress, of the establishment sits enthroned; if the latter, her head bent down over her sewing, and so seated as to command a view of her little collection of goods, and glance into the inner apartments at the same time. It should be remembered that there are few of the principal housekeepers in the large towns of the republic who do not help to "make two ends meet" by selling from a *tienda*, in the most conspicuous part of the house, the various domestic articles demanded by the little world around them. Very few ladies consider themselves too genteel to act as *tienderas*, and, indeed, since the decline of the commerce of the country, many respectable families have been reduced to this means to preserve their station in society, and even to live. Some of the *tiendas*, presided over by the beauties of the city, are the resort of the gallants of Tegucigalpa, who may be seen paying their respects to the divinity within, and showing more substantial evidences of their appreciation by the purchase of trifles, more, perhaps, to see how my lady will roll up a ribbon with her taper fingers than for the intrinsic value of the article. Far in the interior of this almost unknown

country, in a city hitherto neglected by geographers and map-makers, the nicely-calculated flirtation and *piquant* affairs of gallantry are conducted with all the gusto and *finesse* to be looked for in the daintiest circles of fashionable life in the full blaze of *rout* or watering-place.

The goods displayed for sale are neither costly nor valuable, consisting mostly of wearing apparel, such as cotton cloths, os-naburgs, sheeting, drilling, shoes, and the usual array of manufactured articles found in dry-goods stores. It is rare to meet with any shops devoted to the sale of one class of articles. Nearly all combine the goods of the apothecary, dry-goods dealer, grocer, hatter, shoe dealer, saddler, bookseller, confectioner, and stationer, but with extremely limited stocks of each of the trades thus represented. Most of these enter the country *via* Amapala, or La Union, San Salvador, in European vessels, the English always predominating. Occasionally in the stores I noticed American articles, such as patent leather shoes and boots, a few bits of household ware, Lowell manufactured goods, soap, candles, pickles, and liquors; but these were very rare, England appearing to rule the trade in cutlery, manufactured goods, calicoes, ale, cloths, wooden and tin ware; the French those of *vin ordinaire*, Cognac, silks, prints, calico dress patterns, cheese, mustard, gloves, and cassimeres; the Italians such as olives, sweet oil, sardines, macaroni, vermicelli, green cheese, sausages, and some silk goods. Havana and Balize also help to supply Honduras, and, indeed, all Central America, with a variety of articles. The former place and Guatemala send nearly all the books brought into the country. Balize is the emporium of trade on the Atlantic border of Central America, as La Union and Amapala are on the Pacific.

The United States, with their extensive commerce and great manufacturing interests, appear as yet to have cared but little to pry into this market, though a small amount of goods find their way into the interior from Truxillo. That port being the point from which Yoro and Olancho are supplied, and its trade being nearly confined to Boston and New York, the *Olanchanos* are the principal consumers of American goods. Honduras, with her 350,000 inhabitants, is a constantly consuming but slightly producing country, and a successful competition might

easily be established at any prominent sea-port on either the Atlantic or Pacific coast. A few trading vessels have reached Tigre Island from California, freighted with part of the overplus of that market, and some excellent speculations are said to have been made in this way, but as yet European vessels nearly monopolize the trade on both sides the continent. The Costa Rica coffee and sugar trade is now being turned from its old channels toward California, and it is reasonable to suppose that the entire traffic of the Pacific coast of Central America will be essentially conducted between that country and California.

Within the last five years, as the Central American States have become more widely known, commercial monopolies have decreased. A better quality of goods is demanded and consumed. All classes are dressed better than formerly, and American fashions are being introduced. Among the women, costlier articles of wearing apparel are becoming fashionable. The dress of the women of Honduras of the lower classes is of coarse and plain material, such as gingham and calicoes; but the dress of the *lady par excellence* is a different affair, and those to whom I was introduced were often arrayed with a degree of coquettishness fully up to the mark of a foreigner's imagination of a "dark-eyed señorita." The year round, pure white dresses, or those of a light pink or blue *gauzy* stuff, are the ruling style. Instances of bad taste are rare. The fashions are often brought from Havana.

The figures of the ladies, as I noticed them at dances and on promenades, were rather tall, but straight, and all the movements elegant and modest. There were few exceptions to this rule in the parties to which I was invited. Besides the *morenas* with raven hair, who decidedly prevail as to numbers, you sometimes meet a fair complexion, light hair, blue eyes, and ruddy cheeks, especially in the highlands. The delicate paleness usually associated with Spanish tropical beauty is oftener encountered; and such complexions, aided by clear white foreheads, large black or hazel eyes, rather thin lips, and fine teeth, are no inconsiderable attractions when joined, as they frequently are, to a vivacious, joyous disposition. The "languishing" style mostly accompanies the dark complexions, and to a North American, used to the sprightliness of his countrywomen, this

gradually becomes tiresome. The dreamy beauties of this delicious clime are admirable subjects for the novelist or painter, but one looks in vain for the attractions of the cultivated lady of our own favored land. They generally unite the qualities of gentleness, good-humor, and sincerity—pleasing traits in all countries.

Pretty hands and arms are too common to be regarded as particular marks of elegance. On several occasions, however, I noticed that ladies took extra pains to display these little advantages. The hair is oftener worn plaited and put up behind the head than in any other way. Ringlets are seldom seen. At parties or balls the dress is usually white, and very thin. Little jewelry is worn. In the street the *mantilla* is always used, and of late *parasols* have been introduced. Ladies are seldom seen abroad except at morning and toward sunset, and they are rarely accompanied by gentlemen.

Many are graceful, fearless horsewomen. The side-saddle is manufactured in Guatemala, but a few are now being imported from England. The fashion of riding on the *right* side still prevails. The riding-habit does not differ from those of the United States; sometimes the bottom of the dress is loaded with small silver coins fastened through holes in the skirt. A hat (an out-and-out masculine one) is worn, with a heavy black veil. Gloves fringed around the cuffs with silver, and a small Italian riding-whip, complete the attire. Toward the breaking up of the rainy season, before the dust of the dry months has dimmed the sparkle of the green foliage, is the favorite time for equestrian parties. Then the mountain streams are leaping from crag to valley, the roads are good, and the señoritas seldom fail to take advantage of these propitious circumstances.

In the general lack of education the women are taught but little, and when the young lady can play the guitar or piano, waltz, and appear *à la mode* in society, she is served up whole at the altar as quickly as possible, and her matronly duties commence. The few exceptions where young ladies have been sent to the United States to be educated are rare. Such are looked upon by their companions as prodigies of learning. With few or none of the advantages offered in more enlightened countries, the Central American women never fail to interest the traveler



by the peculiar gentleness and dignity of their demeanor, as well as their latent talent and susceptibility of cultivation.

The usual dress of a citizen of the United States will answer for that of a gentleman of Honduras. But the remnants of fashions long since exploded sometimes appear to excite a smile at the attempts of the Beau Brummels of the larger towns—styles which, emanating at Paris, and filtering through the United States and Havana, eventually find their way into the interior of Honduras: English stove-pipe hats, leathern pantaloons, old-fashioned swallow-tailed coats with high collars, and other items, showing what market the old-clothes dealers of Europe find for their superannuated goods. The men are far behind the women in dress. The old Spanish emblem of dignity—the ample blue cloak—still retains its hold upon the affections of the antiquated Dons, and even children are seen enveloped in folds of blue cloth. One of the first things to attract the notice of a stranger in any of the larger towns of Honduras is the “little old man or woman” look of the children. Boys of five or six years of age strut stiffly along, with a black hat, straight collar and cravat, cloak and walking-stick—in fact, with the complete habiliments of full-grown men. The precocious features of the little fellow detract somewhat from the absurdity of the dress. Girls of the same age are seen with luxuriant hair, long dresses, and the ornaments common to young ladies. One little creature who was frequently in the house of Don Jose wore immense ear-rings, a necklace, finger-rings, and had her hair braided and tastefully arranged, more like a bride than a child. The dress adds greatly to the naturally advanced look of the children. All women in Central America grow prematurely old. The same would probably take place with American women living there.

For some years after the independence very eloquent speeches are said to have been made in the Legislature of Honduras. But among the Liberals, it is believed that, the great lights of the country having died, there remain none to maintain the former oratorical power. Barrundia, the last of the old revolutionary stock, has passed away, and it is affirmed that none remain capable of filling his place.

With the adoption of the present Constitution capital punish-

ment was abolished in Honduras. The severest penalty which can now be inflicted is five hundred blows for one offense. According to the severity with which this is applied, the punishment is to be dreaded. The robber Umansor, who recently escaped from the castle at Omoa, and was guilty, it is said, of eight murders, had received four hundred blows on two occasions, but had recovered. Two hundred blows often end the sufferings of the culprit when applied with that design. If it is the intention of the government that the offender shall die, the infliction is administered in such a way that the prisoner has ceased to breathe before the punishment is ended.

The arms of the man are tied around a tree of just sufficient circumference to admit of the wrists meeting and being bound firmly together on the opposite side. The feet are secured by stout cords near the root. The culprit is then stripped to the waist. The instrument of punishment consists of heavy, lithe rods of some tough tree. These are placed in the hands of the executioner, also stripped to the waist, who, standing some distance from the prisoner, places himself in such position as to throw his full strength into the blows. The signal being given, the withe, which is heavy and of the consistency of India-rubber, descends upon the back of the condemned. The effect is scarcely less terrible than that described as following the infliction of the Russian knout. Blow after blow is delivered, until the sufferer, who at first screams with agony and tugs at the thongs which bind him, relapses into silence. His back becomes a mass of clotted gore, and life is often extinct before the full sentence has been complied with. The whipping is performed by two or three executioners, who relieve each other as they become exhausted with the labor.

While on the road from Tegucigalpa, I heard of an instance where a servant had robbed his master in the Department of Comayagua. He attacked him when sleeping, cut his body to pieces with his *machete*, and, taking his money and several mules, escaped in the direction of Omoa. He was pursued by a party of soldiers, who, on capturing him, by the directions of the officer in command, gave him three hundred blows. He did not live to undergo the full sentence. But instances of brutal murder like this are extremely rare. In no part of the world are

property and life more secure than in Honduras, nor are there any people on the continent more peaceable or hospitable than in these mountain regions.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

The great Eruption of Consiguina.—Phenomena in the interior of Honduras.—Central American Volcanoes.—Eruption of “San Miguel.”—“Minerales de Plata.”—Preparations for Olancho.—The Guayape Gold Region: its Accessibility; Obscurity.—Fabulous Accounts.—Favorable Results with the Government.—Ho! for the Guayape.—Leaving Town.—My Mule-train.—Catching Soldiers.—Rio Abajo.—Dr. Don Guillermo again.—Cofradilla.—The Road to Talanga.—A Feast in Talanga.—St. James intoxicated.—Las Cuevas.—An Allspice-tree.

AMONG the many interesting narrations which I obtained from my friend Losano was his account of the famous eruption of the great volcano of Consiguina in 1835. Throughout this section of the country, though many leagues from the mountain, the sierras trembled to their foundations; occasional shocks of earthquakes were felt; the people became suddenly nauseated, while the air filled with fine ashes so as to partially obscure the sun, and the distant bellowings and explosions of the mountain denoted some terrible eruption transpiring in the great range of volcanoes skirting the Pacific coast. Many believed the Judgment day had come. The shocks, however, were not felt in the highlands of Honduras as in other parts of Central America. Passing the mountain some months before, I was shown where a river once flowed through a fertile country into the Bay of Fonseca, but now, and ever since the eruption, bare and desolate, from the vast heaps of ashes thrown from the crater. The explosions were heard across the continent, and ashes were sent to a distance of several hundred miles!

Señor Losano states that for three days the air was filled with an impalpable dust, entering all the cracks and chinks of the houses, and producing a suffocating sensation. At three o'clock P.M. on the 20th, 21st, and 22d of January, 1835, darkness enveloped the whole of interior Honduras. Lights placed upon tables at each end of a room could barely be discerned by a person standing midway between them. Meals

were taken by candle-light. The birds, affrighted by the fearful darkness, flew in terror to the towns, dashing themselves against the houses and falling dead at the doors. In the villages, deer and other wild animals ran, in the gloom, close to the habitations of man. The greatest consternation existed among the people. The reports of the mountain were plainly heard in Guatemala, and the trembling reached even to Mexico. In the more distant sections of the country, the discharges were taken for the firing of contending armies.

"Do you imagine," I asked of the narrator, "that Consiguina will ever again burst forth?"

"Quien sabe?" replied Don Jose Maria, lifting his shoulders and taking another pull at his *cigarro*; "the volcano could never sustain such an eruption again without tearing itself to pieces; but we think here it exhausted itself in that great effort. The loudest noises ever heard by mortal ears were the bellowings of Consiguina for two days and nights!"

The Central Americans yet regard Consiguina with distrust, and have much more faith in the good behavior of little upstart volcanoes, or quiet, familiar old fellows like San Miguel, Conchagua, or Ometepe. During the last ten years there have been comparatively few eruptions or earthquakes in Central America. The long line of volcanoes bristling against the sky, and forming landmarks for the traveler for the whole extent of the Pacific coast, seem to have nearly exhausted themselves in former attempts. Excepting the earthquake which, in April, 1854, destroyed San Salvador, and a few minor shocks experienced in other places, the volcanic agency has given little or no cause for alarm. The occasional eruptions in Guatemala and San Salvador have but in few instances been attended with serious consequences. Those known as the water and fire volcanoes are among the tallest peaks in Central America; the latter, to the southward of Guatemala, still emits fire and smoke. Some well-known ones have grown from a level surface within the memory of persons still living in San Salvador.

Following the Pacific coast to the southward an almost continuous chain of volcanic peaks appears, in which occurs the lofty cone of San Miguel, the range terminating at Conchagua. That of San Miguel emits occasional puffs of white smoke



which may be seen ten leagues off, wreathing at intervals gracefully against the sky. In 1845 there was a partial outbreak of this volcano on the western side, or that opposite to the city. For two days preceding the eruption frequent rumblings gave warning of the approaching convulsion. The earth trembled for many leagues around the mountain, and darkness settled upon the country. A panic, such as had not been known since the catastrophe of Consiguina, seized upon all minds. Prayers were offered up in all the churches, and it is related that thieves, conscience-stricken with the appalling premonitions, came voluntarily to those they had robbed, restoring the stolen property. Many families fled from San Miguel to Tigre Island and other more distant places. The lava issued from a small crater on the western slope of the volcano, and in two days spread over a space of eight miles square, but doing no damage.

The hacienda of an old native, who, with his family, lived two thousand feet up the mountain, was surrounded by the lava, which miraculously forked a few yards above his dwelling, and, closing again below, continued its fiery progress. The rapidity with which the sulphureous exhalations arose saved them from suffocation. They were thenceforth regarded as under the especial protection of the saints.

The phenomena attending the numerous eruptions of the line of volcanoes extending from Guatemala to Costa Rica present some of the most interesting features in geology, and much remains to be added to the facts already collected by scientific explorers. From the earliest settlement of the country by the Spaniards, eruptions and earthquakes have destroyed cities and desolated leagues of territory. Scarcely a town in Central America but has its local account of devastation from these causes, and many of the largest cities have been repeatedly destroyed. The destruction of the city of San Salvador by earthquake on the night of the 16th of April, 1854, forms one of the most frightful narratives on record, and so complete was the ruin created in a few minutes, that those inhabitants who escaped fled forever from the place. The seat of government was removed to the neighboring town of Cojutepeque, and the site of the late city abandoned.

The effects of earthquakes have seldom extended across the

continent. Rare instances are recorded of tremblings along the northern coast of Honduras. The most severe known for many years occurred from the 5th to the 14th of August, 1856, when the entire Caribbean coast was violently shaken. These were distinctly felt at Jamaica, and at Balize, Omoa, and Truxillo: they were violent and long continued. At Truxillo, no less than one hundred and eight shocks were experienced in eight days. Honduras, however, has hitherto been singularly exempt from the visitations afflicting the neighboring republics. From inundations, pestilence, and destroying tempests or hurricanes, there are no accounts of the country ever having suffered, though the long lines of pine timber encountered in the *Ulanos* of the sierras prove that violent northerners sometimes sweep across the continent.

A description of the small towns in the Department of Tegucigalpa, visited during my sojourn in the capital, would be but a repetition of those already given of sierra villages. My principal object at those of Villa Nueva, San Buenaventura, Cedros, Cantarranos, and Guinope, the principal "*minerales*" of this region, was to obtain, from personal inspection, correct knowledge respecting the silver and copper mines, of which, in years past, they have been the local centres, and, as such, celebrated throughout the state. The pages relating to Central Honduras have already been extended beyond my original intention, and, as I visited these places a second time on my return from Olancho, I reserve farther description until my narrative brings me back from that department, comprising as it does that part of Central America known as "Eastern Honduras."

The goal of my hopes from the first had been the gold region, of which the vague accounts I had already heard were augmented and confirmed as I drew nearer to the Guayape. Tegucigalpa is but a week's journey from the head waters of this river, and I had no difficulty in obtaining a variety of information, most of which, however, was limited to hearsay.

Several old works in the possession of Señor Ugarte, making reference to the Guayape and the fame of its *placers*, were kindly placed at my disposal by their owner. While making extracts from these, I had leisure to reflect upon the singular circumstances which had originated and brought this enterprise

to its present condition, and to ponder on the possible results of publishing in the form of a book or report the facts brought to my notice. Every day I met with respectable persons who, knowing the objects of my visit, readily engaged in conversation on the subject, and gravely repeated traditions of the richness of the famous "gold river," which, but for the frequent realization of such statements in the land of gold I had lately left, would have staggered my belief in the sincerity of my informants.

Why such placers as were reported to exist on the Guayape and its tributaries were not worked; why they were not generally known to the world; why the narrators themselves, with the knowledge of such facts, failed to avail themselves of them; why the mahogany-cutters communicating with the coast had never made them public; and why the country had not long since, like California, been overrun with adventurous gold-hunters, were questions I then, as I had often before, asked myself. To these very natural queries the answers are that no means, capacity, or inclination has ever existed among the *Olanchanos* to discover the wealth of the lands which have lain under their careless footsteps, as those of California did under the tread of the Indians, undeveloped for ages, until the hand of industry made them available; and that for two centuries since the conquest of the country, Olancho, which is a northerly continuation of the Mosquito coast, has been out of the track of commerce. Like the secluded regions of the Mosquito kingdom, its sierras and silent cattle-plains have remained in the same primitive condition they occupied fifty years after the early settlement by the Spaniards. The traces of the old Spanish workings are yet found—their rude implements and deep holes along the banks of the rivers. The country, save by a few dreamy legends, has been an unknown land to the world.

Few have actually known of its existence, and not one in ten of the best-informed geographers ever heard of "Olancho," or its capital, "Jutecalpa." Even Tegucigalpa, a considerable city, and situated in the better-known part of Honduras, seems, until lately, to have been left out of every map of Central America. Fewer still have cared to penetrate from the coast of the Caribbean Sea into an undefined and distant interior; and on the Pa-

cific side, the occasional foreign vessels visiting the coast for purposes of trade previous to the gold discoveries in California have merely touched and departed ; Olancho, until within a few years, has been indeed a "sealed book ;" the inhabitants of the rest of Honduras seem as much in the dark on this subject as foreigners, and none were able to give more than hazy statements of the Guayape and its placers. Add to this a general dislike of visiting Olancho from the reported suspicious disposition of its Indians, their jealousy regarding the gold washings, and the naturally indolent character of the Hondureños, and it is easily explained why the citizens of other sections of the state have not commenced the development of the mines.

The mahogany cutting of the Guayape and Wanks Rivers, and, indeed, of all the streams draining Eastern Honduras, dates but a few years back. The first done on the Guayape, Guayambre, or Jalan, all forming the Patook, discharging into the Caribbean Sea, was in 1848, and the work, carried on by Jamaica negroes and Central Americans, was neither likely to develop the gold mines or circulate the news that any such existed. The few turtle-traders or mahogany-droughers plying along the keys between Cape Gracias á Dios and Balize would scarcely be likely to prove means of disseminating information on any subject, nor would their statements be credited. It will thus appear why the mineral wealth of Eastern Honduras has remained confined to the knowledge of a few persons, through whose means the facts came into my possession. The fame of the Guayape, however, was not unknown in England, and the desire to become possessed of this country, together with the mahogany interests of numerous wealthy London houses, may help to explain the pertinacity with which Great Britain has clung to the apparently worthless coast of Honduras.

That one of the finest mineral countries in the world, lying on a natural highway of our own commerce, should have remained unoccupied by Americans to the present time, would be inexplicable were it not a parallel to the same negligence which left undiscovered so long the gold mines of California and Australia. At present, the colonial movements of the Anglo-Saxons are controlled, or, at least, greatly influenced by discoveries of the precious metals. Of these movements, some are injudi-



cious and unfortunate, costing immense sums of money and the lives of multitudes of adventurers, whose enthusiasm exceeds their sagacity. The conditions of rapid and complete success in the establishment of a mining colony are threefold: The inhabitants of the region colonized should be either too few in number to incommode the miners, as was the case in California, or well disposed toward them at their first coming; the climate must be either temperate if low, or moderately elevated above the ocean if it is tropical; finally, it must be accessible by sea, and will be more easily colonized as it is nearer to some one of the grand routes of commerce.

Let us suppose, for instance, that gold mines similar to those of California should be discovered on the shores of Lake Nicaragua, ten days' sail from New York. The climate, which, though in the *tierra caliente*, is not a deadly one; the soil, the cheapness of all the necessaries of life, and the safe and speedy access, would naturally attract thousands of peaceful and industrious laborers and settlers, who, without war, but by the mere irresistible course of things, would create a new republican state in that portion of Central America, entirely independent of the series of events transpiring in the last twelve months.

But, unfortunately for Nicaragua, the gold deposits are in the interior, far removed from the line of American travel, and situated in the District of Segovia, on the Honduras frontier, where commence the great auriferous fields which are to Central America what the centre of the California mining region is to the surrounding agricultural districts. The region of the lakes is not the region of the precious deposits.

Those, on the other hand, who have resided for any length of time in Nicaragua, or who have conversed freely with travelers and natives of that country, will have heard of the "Guayape gold" brought by the Indians and local traders toward the sea-coast of Honduras, and reputed the richest in the world. Time out of mind this gold has been used by the natives of Central America for ornamental purposes, but the placers from which it is taken are unknown to the world at large. This gold region is near to one of those high roads of our own commerce already surveyed for a transit route by an organization of American capitalists. I have already referred to the enterprise of the

Honduras Inter-oceanic Rail-road. The gold region of Olancho lies due east by easy access from the projected line of transit. Every variety of gold deposit has been found upon the Guayape and its tributaries, and the lesser particles are diffused through the soil and sands of every stream or cañon in the country.

These facts, startling as they may appear, and already made the subject of my own magazine and pamphlet publications, are at this moment disclosing themselves before the adventurous tread of the American miner, and many months can not elapse before Olancho, with its healthy climate, valuable vegetable products, and extensive region of gold placers, must become the home of considerable numbers of our people.

It was with a knowledge of the above facts, somewhat matured by conversation with the best informed natives I could find, that I set about preparing for my departure from the city, where in a few weeks I had made many warm friends, all of whom gave me their best wishes and loads of advice for the success of my enterprise. After the customary delays, without which no negotiation can ever be brought to a successful close in Central America, I secured from the supreme government some valuable privileges, among which was the right to enter into all manner of contracts for mining or commercial purposes with natives of the country, which must be subject to the sanction and approval of the government. All mechanical implements, machinery, scientific instruments, and other articles necessary for the eventual consummation of such contracts were to be admitted free of duty, and the vessels unrestricted in their navigation of the rivers. This decree having been published in the *Gaceta*, the government organ, my kind friend Cabañas, to impart additional importance to my enterprise, sent me an appointment as "Honduras Consul General in the United States," a passport through Honduras signed by the Minister of *Hacienda*, a packet of introductory letters to all persons of importance in Olancho, and particularly to the "Zelaya family;" a trusty traveling guide and servant, and, on the evening previous to my departure, called at the house with his parting advice and to say "*Adios!*" Other friends also came to express their kind wishes and to give me additional letters of introduction.

Meantime all preparations had been made, and on the follow-

ing morning, at peep of dawn, the mules were brought out into the *patio*, where my *muchacho*, Roberto, had them speedily saddled and loaded. I had engaged an acquaintance, Señor L——, of Tegucigalpa, to accompany me in the capacity of draughtsman, some very correct drawings of his having been shown me, and he expressing a desire to visit Olancho on his own account. I soon found him to be an agreeable companion, while his knowledge of the people was of frequent use. Our little train of five mules trotted gayly out of the city, which we had left some distance behind us as the sun arose over the eastern edge of the Cordilleras.

It was with feelings akin to exultation that I found myself once more abroad, mounting the rugged spurs of the mountains, inhaling again the soft but bracing upland breezes, “my scrip and purse” well lined, mules in good order, cheerful companions, a budget of excellent introductory letters to the principal *Olanchanos*, and the countenance and favor of the government and leading families to assist my enterprise. Our “luggage” was equally divided between the two pack-mules, one carrying the provisions, and the other our clothes, instruments, and traveling paraphernalia. A mile from *La Paroquia* we crossed the Rio Grande, from which we made a steep ascent of a thousand feet above the city. From this summit we started for the village of Rio Abajo, situated about two leagues to the N.N.E. of Tegucigalpa. Stopping on two occasions to make sketches, our boys and pack-mules got far in advance, and pursuing our route to the village, we found them wrangling with a party of recruiting soldiers. The mules had been unloaded, and a formidable squad of barelegged fellows surrounded the disconsolate party, now augmented by the father of Roberto, all vociferating at the pitch of their lungs! Muskets were handled furiously, and in the midst stood my servant, wringing his hands, and looking the personification of grief. As we rounded a bend in the road, this picturesque scene burst suddenly into view. We galloped to the spot, while Roberto and his father rushed toward us, sputtering and gesticulating like maniacs. While I was listening to their statement, an officer, somewhat better dressed than the rest, approached.

“Señor,” said I, “of what crime has my servant been guilty, that you detain him?”

"Of no crime, caballero," replied the officer; "but the government has commissioned me to catch (*coger*) soldiers for the army, as well as to seize upon all mules found on the road, and I am but doing my duty."

"But," I replied, "are you not aware that I am traveling through the country under the protection of government? See, here is my passport as Honduras consul, and here are letters for the President himself."

"In that case, caballero, I release you; but here comes my superior officer, Colonel Rubi."

And in truth, from a branch road, at that moment he appeared, with a long train of men, numbering some two hundred, walking two and two, dirty and bedraggled, and, withal, the sorriest looking creatures I had seen in the country. Upon recognizing me the colonel rode hastily up, and, his quick eye detecting the state of affairs, he berated the official in no measured terms for his stupidity, and then, handing me a cigar, begged that I would think no more of the indignity. While the men were reloading the mules, I found time to inquire of my friend the colonel the object of this "*cogiendo*," as it is termed.

"This is a sad anomaly," said I, "on your boasted democratic institutions. "Oh! as for that," he replied, "it is done all through Central America; the country must be defended, and then we pay them. General Cabaños becomes a father to these poor fellows; but, despite all he does for them, they take the first opportunity to run away home again. Would you believe it, only two weeks since Colonel —— was coming out of Yoro with a hundred of them for the army, when they revolted in the road, and all took to their heels into the woods, leaving the colonel to ride back alone."

I could not blame them for such a very natural resistance, but inquired, "Do you ever penetrate into Olancho to 'catch' soldiers?"

"Caramba! no," replied the colonel, with a grim smile. "Those *Olanchanos* are *diablos*! They carry long knives and guns, and when they are too few to fight they hide in the mountains with the Indians. No, no, we never attempt to catch them; they are *muy bravo*, and altogether beyond our control. Many years since the supreme government invaded Olancho, but it was

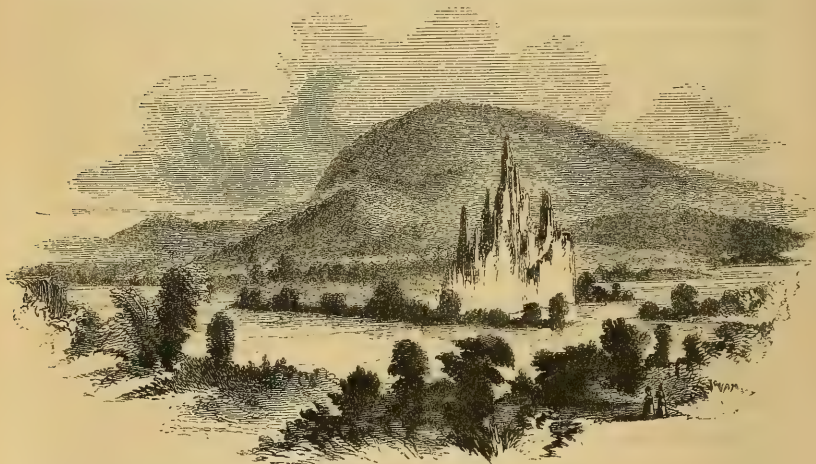


the *first* and *last* time," he added, with a significant nod. "The government is afraid of the *Olanchanos*," he said, after a moment's silence; "they are a little republic by themselves."

The colonel laughed at the idea of my effecting any contract with the Zelayas, and repeated the old Central American proverb, "*Olancho, ancho para entrar, angosto para salir*," a warning which, whether it applied to the fascinations of the women or the hidden perils of the country, I was little disposed to take to myself.

The *hombres cojidos* were again put in motion, the colonel first seeing them pass before him on the road toward Tegucigalpa, and then, with a gay "*adios!*" he spurred after them, and was out of sight in a twinkling.

One of the mules having grown lame, it was determined to send to the city for another, which detained us until afternoon. As the next town, San Diego de Talanga, was eight leagues distant, it was deemed prudent to pass the night at Rio Abajo.



VIEW NEAR RIO ABAJO.

The mules were consequently unloaded and placed inside of our stopping-place, the house of Señor Laines, Roberto's father, where we prepared to make ourselves comfortable amid screeching children, fleas, indescribable noises, and the essence of dirt. There are eleven houses in Rio Abajo. On a little hillock near our house Don Domingo Somebody was making soap out of

goat's flesh, which he stirred with a stick as it boiled over the crackling fire. The boiler was of adobe, plastered within, and set into a rude framework of brick. This is the only soap used or made in the country towns, and very wretched stuff it is. But little pains are taken to exclude dirt.

Entering the house, I found one of the children moaning with pain produced by a diseased leg, which, probably from exposure, was shriveled into a misshapen stick. My fame as a *medico* had not escaped Roberto, and I was immediately besought to examine the patient. I had long since learned to comply with such requests with the best grace, and, after a due consultation, prescribed out of my box a mixture of camphor, salt, and Cayenne pepper, to be dissolved in hot water, and rubbed upon the limb. Either from a general faith in the prescriber, or the effect of the chafing, the pain subsided, greatly to my astonishment, and thus, much against my will, I found my reputation enhanced.

To my efforts in the medical science was no doubt owing the excellent supper spread before us by the gratified mother. Among the dishes was a tureen of sour cream, into which were freshly broken bits of newly-baked *tortillas*, hot from the fire. After supper my boy slung my hammock, and I had hardly dropped into a doze when the groaning of the child again aroused me. We were nine persons sleeping in the only room in the house. At my call for a light the señora entered with a blazing pine knot, and the little hut, thus illumined, presented a spectacle I was not then used to, but which, ere long, became familiar by frequent repetition. On the two beds of hide lay a heap of children, stark naked, their eyes blinking painfully in the glare of the torch. The señora herself was clad in a scanty night-dress, over which her long, coarse hair fell with a wild, unnatural look, heightened by the spectacle of her black eyes and swarthy face. The features of Señor Laines protruded from beneath a ragged coverlet, reminding me of a bear thrusting its shaggy head from a bunch of underbrush. L——, enveloped in a sheet, lay snoring beneath my hammock; the servants were coiled up on the saddles and mule-blankets; the centre of the house was occupied by several dogs, who seemed little disposed to move at the shrill voice of the mistress of the mansion. On

a framework, erected for their special accommodation, was a row of fighting-cocks, whose discontent at the sudden illumination was expressed in deep chuckles of rage and vicious pecks. Overhead from the rafters dangled strings of sausages, Chili peppers, plantains, and a variety of garden vegetables, the whole scarcely discernible through a network of cobwebs, whose nimble-footed proprietors—they too awakened into sudden vigilance by the torchlight—hastened about in fearful proximity to my nose.

The Cayenne pepper, salt, and camphor were again applied, and this time with such success that the little sufferer went to sleep. The night was cool, so as to require the use of all my bedclothes. On the following morning we were early astir. While the boys were saddling the mules, we had a few moments to gaze around us. The sun rose over a cloudless crest of blue mountains, known as the Jutiapa range. The little village is placed in an extensive valley, surrounded by numerous peaks, all of which, in the early dawn, have that singular variegated hue never seen out of the clear mountain regions. The voices of a variety of birds came from the adjoining woods, and dirty, squalid, and miserable as the hamlet seemed, I felt a thrill of pleasure in gazing abroad upon the marvelous beauty of the scenery. We were soon beyond the noise of pigs, dogs, and poultry, and again in the open country, our mules plodding briskly up and down the *cuestas*, and the jubilant Roberto from time to time breaking out into a half crying, half ludicrous song, apparently the lament of some ill-used señorita to a naughty padre,

“*O! que estais haciendo, Fraile Pedro, Fraile Pedro,  
O! que estais haciendo, Fraile Pedro?*”

at the close of which he would dash his stick at the nearest mule, causing a temporary stampede in the train, and a tremendous jolting of their assorted loads.

At 9 A.M. we arrived at a small collection of huts known as Cofradilla. Our course from Rio Abajo was nearly N.E., and making a very gradual ascent. From Cofradilla the view is fine, the *Montañas de las Moras* bounding the horizon to the N.N.E., and those of *Cantoral* to the N.W. The former range is named from the blackberries, which, in the season of them, are found in great quantities. Before rising the mountain, immediately after leaving Rio Abajo, we had forded the Rio Grande



at the *Fernando Soto*, crossing where I was informed several persons had been drowned in attempting to pass it.

We rode up to the house of Señora Soto, the principal habitation of the place, and by the display of a few *reales* induced the mistress to send for some milk and chickens, to which we did full justice. Here I saw the *Chichicasta*-tree, a species of cowhage, but not the *Dolichos pruriens*. Near the house were a few rude plows and farming implements, but all was still and apparently palsied. Far away on a bleak hill I could discern two human forms, but with these exceptions there was no sign of life, save in the shape of a few squalid children. Deep pine-forests, silent but for the murmur of the breeze through their tops, bounded the view to the east and north. The sensations with which one moves through these dreary solitudes are inexpressibly sad. The herbage is low and uninviting in appearance, and the change from the floral wealth of the Nicaraguan lowlands to these elevated regions is marked and striking.

Leaving the little village, we continued our course to the northeastward, and, after traveling two leagues through an apparently interminable labyrinth of steep mountains, came to the Rio Ylimapa, a noisy mountain affluent of the Rio Grande. Crossing this, we found ourselves at the base of a remarkable limestone hill, which, shooting up like the steps of a miniature

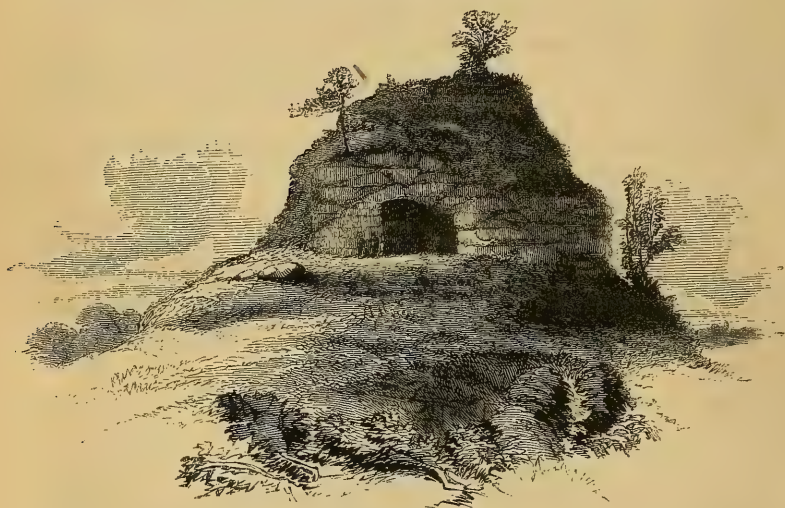


LIMESTONE HILL.



mountain range, formed a beautiful natural fortification. The road wound gradually up its side, and the whole, which was of the color and nearly of the consistency of chalk, shone beneath the ardent sun as if it had been newly painted white; it was difficult to gaze upon it fixedly for a moment. The mules' feet have worn a series of steps as regularly defined as if cut by art. From its crest we gazed beyond toward the *Montañas de los Ranchitos*, far to the eastward, their distant tops penciled in sharp outline against the blue ether.

There is a gentle descent from the hill before you commence rising the lofty peaks beyond. L—— made a sketch of this, as well as of another remarkable rock capping the Tusterique Hill,



TUSTERIQUE HILL.

which we passed a league farther on. Here appears a cave, apparently built by an extinct race. The stones of granite are laid regularly as by the hands of architects. Within these are squared blocks, the whole overgrown with shrubbery. The outside is covered with a dense growth of vines and bushes. Neither of my boys knew any thing of its origin, nor had any inquiries ever been made on the subject. The difficulty of the ascent and the lack of time prevented my giving it the deserved attention. The interior is haunted by quantities of bats, said to be a species of the vampyre, and by which some of the finest mules in

the country have been seriously wounded. A league beyond, we crossed a very clear and rapid stream, called *el Rio Zorilla*, or Skunk River. The sparkling waters gave the lie to its unsavory name. It flows from the N.W. into the *Rio Grande*. The mountains of *Ranchito* still arose in our course. Beyond them comes the plain of Talanga, in which the town of that name is situated. The intervening country is of granite and limestone formation, interspersed with a red rock, easily crumbling and breaking into minute squares. The boldness of the hill sides, however, in many places had exposed them to the action of storms, which, laying bare the white substances beneath, left huge, unsightly, sunburnt streaks, glittering from afar over the heated and silent country. The mountain ridges were scantily wooded with pine and oak.

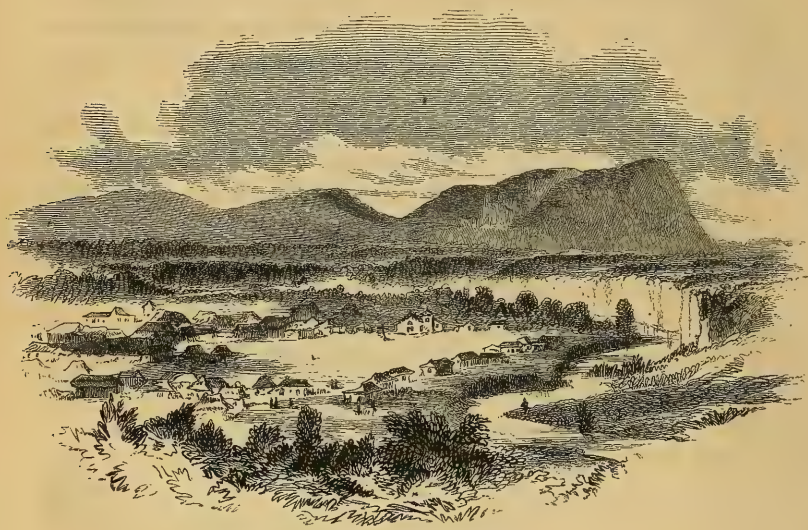
This Ranchito range once crossed, we looked down upon the great valley of Talanga. The descent is abrupt and precipitous. In all directions lay heaps of fallen pines, whose roots, apparently penetrating not a foot into the shallow soil, were clogged with lumps of sand and limestone. The road, leading around a promontory or spur of the mountain, afforded a beautiful view of the valley, an extensive and fertile plain still wet with the late rains. We followed a miry path along the Quebrada de Talanga or Rio Salado, as it is sometimes called. This is said to be one of the branches of the Sulaco, flowing into the Humuya.

The road, which over the "*cuestas*" had been hard and dry, now became muddy, heavy, and obstructed with long, trailing roots. Vegetation assumed a ranker appearance, and the black loam bore thousands of bright green plants and numerous attractive flowers. Swamps, impenetrable for their dense undergrowth, bordered the path to the left, and a forest of endless variety to the right. Night overtook us in this slough of despond, although we belabored our animals without mercy. The hum of myriads of insects, and the voice of night reptiles, came loudly through the air. At last we began to see what in the darkness appeared to be an opening ahead, and our mules, slipping and stumbling in mud nearly of the consistency of putty, snuffed eagerly at the prospect of a speedy termination of their labors. We came out upon a great plain covered with low, clustering trees, and, though very fertile, said to be unhealthy. It is but little cultivated.

After leaving the swamp we followed a mule-path for two leagues through darkened thickets, frequently crossing little streams, until a sudden turn brought us in sight of a glare of red light, which, with explosions of bombs and the cries of an excited population, made me doubt for a moment the propriety of entering the town.

“A revolution, sure as fate,” said L——.

But, as we drew nearer, the sound of fiddles and guitars undeceived us, and, clapping spurs to our jaded beasts, we cantered into the little town of San Diego de Talanga. We found the



SAN DIEGO DE TALANGA.

Plaza and streets light as day with bonfires, and the houses re-echoing the explosions of crackers, torpedoes, and *bombas*, among which the juvenile population yelled and capered, their dusky forms flitting among the flames like so many imps incarnate. At first glance the scene was picturesque, but all romance vanished upon closer inspection.

There was a general rush toward us as we passed through the fiery ordeal, causing our pack-mules to gallop off into the darkness, followed by Diego and Roberto, whose indignant “*Caramba ! que muchachos estos !*” was returned with a shout from the half-crazy youngsters. While the boys were driving the



animals back, we were surrounded by a group of hideous old beldames, whose leathery skins, bleared eyes, and withered features reminded us of the weird sisters of the blasted heath. To my inquiries, they replied that this was the grand *dia de fiesta* of Talanga, when all persons, from the priest down, were licensed to get drunk, dance, and yell to their hearts' content, a fact I was not disposed to dispute, judging from the grotesque figures around me. The appearance of these half-naked, wrinkled witches was rendered more horrible by the glare of the bonfires.

Turning from this sickening spectacle we rode to the *cabilda*, where another crowd, in somewhat better trim than they of the *Plaza*, directed us to the house of an acquaintance of L——, a Señor Don Gregorio Moncada, living near the church. We rode to the adobe hut designated, dismounted, and were received with noisy welcome. They were a young couple, the señora having been recently married, and before the nuptials said to have been one of the belles of Cedros, a town some ten leagues to the northward. The conversation of the lady gradually dissipated the unfavorable impression I had first formed of Talanga. She disliked the place, she said, and longed for nothing so much as to live in Tegucigalpa, to her the head-quarters of elegance and fashion in the world. In fact, Honduras was her world, for she knew nothing about any other. After supper, we followed the direction of a band of musicians to the opposite side of the *Plaza*. This was the last day of the feast, and the inhabitants were determined to see the affair over with due demonstrations. We stood with the crowd at the door, and looked into the house, where the whirling dancers were stepping out to the twang and squeak of the instruments. Suddenly the master of the house caught sight of my anti-Central American face, and in another moment was at the door for a nearer view. A whispered word from Roberto, revealing that I was an *Americano del Norte* and a government official, such an acquisition to his ball was not to be despised, and, authoritatively clearing a lane before me, he politely begged us to enter and select a partner. To say that we did not accept the invitation and join in the line of whizzing couples would be an injustice to the generous host, who designated to us the best waltzers in the room. The floor



was of mud, and the walls of unburnt *adobes*. So the reader can easily imagine the company by the style of reception-hall.

On returning to the house of Don Gregorio, we found a fire blazing in a corner of the one room constituting the interior of the dwelling, and, truly, the rather sharp air seemed to warrant it. At a given signal the lights were modestly extinguished, and in the darkness could be heard the silent rustling from different corners denoting the preparations of the numerous occupants for the night's rest. Mine was the only hammock, and this, slung from the old rafters, served me far better than the miserable arrangements of bulls' hide stretched around beneath. Excepting the usual flea-pest and the distracting bleating of goats, nothing disturbed our slumbers, and early on the following morning we arose much refreshed. During the packing process I strayed out into the Plaza to view the town. It was a miserable collection of adobe huts, the church the only pretending edifice among them. A religious procession, consisting of all the women of the place, headed by the padre, passed by the house just as we were mounting. They carried a ridiculous effigy of the patron saint of the place (San Diego), and, with all my customary gravity on such occasions, I had much to do to restrain my laughter. The old fellow, with a beard a foot in length, and clad in the cheap finery of the town, was seated on a chair, his brows crowned with palm-leaves, and a veritable sailor's tin pot in his hand. By some piece of carelessness on the part of his bearers, his head had got loose, the motion of which was precisely like that of a drunken fiddler nodding with maudlin stupidity to the crowd. The tin pot, emblematical of potations, and the crown of what, at a distance, resembled grape-leaves, completed the Bacchanalian resemblance. Lifting our hats reverentially to this august group, we rode hastily away, but, once out of hearing, we roared for three miles beyond the town.

The Señora Nicolasa Moncada had kindly filled a pickle bottle with butter for us, but, ere half a mile of our journey had been accomplished, the clumsy Diego, to whom it had been intrusted, let it drop—purposely, I believe—and this doubtful delicacy was denied us. An hour's rapid trot took us across the valley to the foot of the Vindel Mountains. As we ascend-

ed them we looked back upon the town, which, like all Spanish settlements, has the most attractive appearance at a distance.

On our way up the rugged ascent we encountered a train of mules *en route* for San Miguel. In advance rode two women, carrying baskets with holes in the tops, out of which protruded the red gills of half a dozen fighting-cocks. One of the *arieros* had a lusty fellow strapped at his back. They hoped to reach San Miguel in time to enter their birds at the approaching fair of November.

We stopped at noon at *Las Cuevas*, or the Caves, midway between Talanga and Guaymaca. Under the projecting brow of a cliff is a deep indentation in the hill, blackened with the smoke of many fires, denoting where travelers have stopped to cook. A stream of water flows past this place, and here we dismount-

ed to make coffee. While thus engaged, a train of cattle from Olancho, on their way to San Miguel, came past. They were healthy and fat, and their passing gave rise to some thrilling stories from my boys in relation to the dangerous calling of a drover. Sometimes herds of cattle, numbering two thousand, are driven out of Olancho into Guatemala, and on the road the *vaqueros* are often attacked by the infuriated animals, and gored to death. These men have been found hanging, torn and mangled, from the limb of a tree on the road side,



TRAVELEERS NOONING.

where, after killing them, the beasts had tossed the bodies with their horns.

From where we were sitting my attention was drawn to a tree with a dense rich green foliage, some twenty feet in height,

and standing apart from a number of trees much resembling sycamores. Diego collected from the limbs some of the dried berries, or fruit of the past season, which I immediately recognized as similar to those I had seen for sale in the *Plaza* market at Tegucigalpa, in small baskets, with the name of *pimiento gordo*. It was the real allspice, as I found by putting them to my tongue. They are worth about ten cents a pound in the markets. I afterward found that it flourishes with remarkable vigor and beauty in all parts of Olancho. In a dozen rides I encountered its tall, well-proportioned trunk, its dark brown bark smooth as the silver birch. The foliage resembles that of the bay-tree. Its presence may often be detected by the aromatic odor filling the air. Though the allspice-tree is largely cultivated in the West India islands, no similar attempt appears to have been made in the adjacent main land. The natives gather the fruit from the wild tree in the flowering season (July) in a green state. They are brought in bags to the small towns of Olancho, placed in the sun, winnowed, and, when completely dried and wrinkled, are sold to the dealers, who, after collecting a sufficient quantity, bale them up for the fair of San Miguel. The seeds are said to be dropped about the country by birds, thus propagating them to infinity.

The allspice is not found in sufficient quantities to warrant the establishment of a trade, but the excellent quality of that gathered by the natives shows that it could be cultivated with great success. Its name, *allspice*, arises from a supposed combination of the aroma of the nutmeg, clove, and cinnamon. It is used throughout Honduras to season food, and is generally known as *pimiento gordo*. It flowers in Olancho in July and August. In two of the private gardens of Tegucigalpa several specimens of this tree were growing when I was last there. They are valued in such locations particularly for their aromatic fragrance, which, after a shower, when the leaves and fruit have been shaken and bruised, is very grateful.

Our repast ended, we once more mounted and followed the trail to the northeast. The pine region still continued, interspersed with occasional clumps of other trees, the more noticeable for their rarity. But the country gradually grew more open, and sloped down from the Vindel Mountains toward the

valley of Guaymaca, discovering, at times, extensive grazing plains crossed by rivulets. Some of these were two or three leagues in extent, and, at my expressions of admiration, my boy Diego gravely advised me to preserve my astonishment for Olancho, where, he had always heard, were the most beautiful valleys in Honduras. The rancho of *Ojos de Agua* is the only habitation between Talanga and Guaymaca. This we passed without visiting, as it lay a mile to the northward of the road.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

Night in the Sierra.—A Norther in the Vindel Mountains.—Perils of the Pass.—Guaymaca.—A Midnight Reception.—“Tired Nature’s Sweet Restorer.”—Preparing for the “Funcion.”—Hunting for a Breakfast.—Squalid Misery.—A Mountain Scene.—Volcan de Guaymaca.—Salto.—El Rio Rodondo.—A Source of the Guayape.—Inaugural Ceremonies.—Campamento.—Mary of the Holy Cross.—Midnight Musings.—An Earthquake.—Appearance of the Campamento Range.—Cold Weather.—Glowing Accounts by “las Lavaderas.”—Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties.—Gold Washing in the Rio de Concordia.—Visions.—Rio Guayapita.—Rio Almendarez.—El Valle de Lepaguare.—Cattle.—Scenery of the Valley.

NIGHT came on, and the faint light which had a while allowed us to distinguish the path now gave place to an impenetrable gloom. The forest waved ominously, and the silence maintained by all brought more sadly to mind the loneliness of our position. Heavy drops of rain began to patter among the leaves, and far behind us, through the darkness, came the prolonged howl of some gaunt denizen of the forest, which I believed to be a cougar: the tiger of Central America rarely awakens the echoes with its cries.

Cautiously our faithful animals felt their way along the path, the stones slipping from under their feet at every step; now sliding down some declivity unseen by the rider, but evidently visible to them, and again mounting, with a half scramble, the fragments of some splintered boulder obstructing the path, or as often stopping to smell, with ears erect, at the stump of a tree protruding into the road. Under such circumstances, it is folly to attempt guiding these sagacious camels of the sierra. With the reins gathered loosely, clear of their steps, we allowed them



to select their own gait and path, which being utterly unable to discern, we resigned ourselves, with all the faith we could muster, to the discretion of our sure-footed beasts. It is under such circumstances that the value of the mule becomes apparent, when the horse, noble animal as he is, would precipitate himself and rider to destruction for the lack of this unerring certainty of step.

On each side of us the gnarled and dripping limbs tossed their branches in the north wind, which, as the darkness spread over the sierras, gradually increased into a storm. At times, when the windings of the road brought the gale to our backs, the mules hastened before it, carefully drooping their long, tender ears from the pelting rain; but when brought to face the blast they swerved aside, or came to a dead stand, from which blunted spurs, anathemas, and blows seemed alike incapable of arousing them.



IN THE MOUNTAIN STORM.

The roaring of the storm among the pines, mingled with the crash of falling trees, the bitter spite of the wind, the darkness, and the broken character of the road, combined to make this the most fearful night we had encountered, and I secretly cursed the folly of undertaking a winter journey into a country at best

but little known, and for an object of the existence of which I had hitherto only heard exaggerated legends and the obscure accounts of the natives of the country. L—— pulled his hat over his face, and, with head bent to the mule's neck, spurred and kicked his animal forward. I shouted back to him, and he screamed in reply, but a dash of blinding rain bore away his words, and, at the same instant, a stout pine, which had been piping in its upper limbs like the rigging of a ship, swayed fearfully in the gale, and crashed to the earth over the path we had but a moment before crossed. The breaking of its limbs resounded through the woods above the voice of the storm.

"*Caramba!*" said Roberto, spitting the rain from his mouth and crossing himself; "*que noche espantosa!*"

I now recalled the long lines of pines fallen in one direction which I had seen extending leagues through the woods toward *Las Cuevas*, and could readily imagine the cause of their downfall. The violent northers, bursting upon the coast of Mexico and along the Spanish Main, always extend into the Cordilleras of Central America, where, pent up among the mountain barriers, they tear with resistless fury through the cañons and passes, often overturning mule and rider, and leveling leagues of forest.

The Atlantic slope of the sierra toward Olancho is intersected with narrow gorges, acting as funnels or conductors to the winter gales. Similar formations are found in the mountains of Gracias, toward the Guatemalan frontier, where a location has become famous from the fact that, in passing it, the rider must dismount and crawl through, or take the chance of flying, with his animal, down some precipice, where the zopilotes and cougars might thank the norther for their feast. We pushed on, now scrambling up declivities, whose winding pathway, cut up with rivulets born of the storm, and tumbling fiercely along their stony beds, formed a rolling and uncertain foothold for the animals, or holding back, as the road, pitched at a steep angle, obliged them to half slide to the even ground beneath.

In the piercing cold, it required some stretch of imagination to conjure up phrases illustrative of tropical climes; in short, the weather was as untropical as could well be imagined, and this, too, in a region commonly associated with death-dealing

miasmas, swamps redolent of malaria, and the cadaverous features of the fever-stricken residents. The difference between the *tierras calientes* of the Mosquito coast and the cool tablelands of all interior Honduras is the most remarkable fact forcing itself upon the foreigner.

Toward midnight we approached the village of Guaymaca, situated in the valley of that name. The storm still swept the ravines as we descended. Removed from the ordinary routes of travel, these mountain villages present pictures of extreme poverty, unrelieved by any communication with the outer little world of Honduras, itself a hermit's cell compared with the other Central American states. I have endeavored to depict the condition of these settlements in the few already described, that the future traveler, if such there should ever be in these parts, may form some idea of the entertainment he is likely to meet with. You encounter them at long intervals, with each eight or ten leagues of intermediate desolation.

The villagers seem to have nothing to eat, or, if they have, it is so little that they are loth to share or sell it. A few *tortillas*, a flock of lean fowls, perhaps an attenuated porker, constitute the only visible means of subsistence for each family. Let the reader picture a barren mountain path winding among such scenery as has already been described. It is in the dry season: a cold night wind whistles through the scanty herbage, carrying clouds of dust, and half sweeping you from your saddle. You have fasted since daylight, and a mind predisposed to despondency by weariness and hunger, for a long time silently endured, is excited to ill-defined but sad forebodings. Suddenly the distant bark of a dog arouses your sensitive mules. They quicken their pace, and slide rapidly down the steep declivities. If it be in the wet season, you are probably saturated with rain, and blinded with the incessant lightning flashes, almost searing your eye-balls with their intensity. Soon you are advancing upon a level ground, and in the middle of a small plain, an eighth of a mile wide, may be seen the outline of some Indian huts. A troop of savage curs rushes out, and your advance is announced by a grand chorus of pigs, mules, horses, and feathered choristers, but as yet no sign or voice of humanity; no lights in the village; all dark, silent, and asleep. The ghostly



outlines of the surrounding hills, give forth a solemn and chilling murmur from amid the pine groves skirting their summits.

Saddle-sore, and faint with weariness and a day's hunger, you alight, and, after stumbling through duck-ponds and ditches, grope your way to the entrance of the largest hut amid a collection of reeking cabins of adobe, more resembling those of Hot-tentots than of even semi-civilized beings. You forbear to open the doors forcibly, remembering certain snarling wolf-curs, against whose glistening teeth neither leggins nor boot-tops are proof. You raise the voice in silvery Castilian, pleading for admission: answer, a grunt. You add pecuniary inducements in more emphatic Castilian: answer, a burst of baby voices shrieking in chorus, and the scold of the vigilant señora, arousing her sleepy Don, and bidding him open the door to the strangers. Don Fulano, alcalde primero of a hundred natives, rolls half-naked from his bull's hide, to the sorrow of an army of fleas, opens the door a crack, and, peering forth into the wet night, utters the monosyllable "*Quien ?*"

A parley ensues, in which the principal arguments on his side are,

"*No hay para comer,*" "*muy pobre,*" "*ni viveres ni camas hay ;*" and on yours,

"*Oficial del Gobierno,*" "*El Presidente Cabañas,*" "*Don Francisco Zelaya,*" "*Christianos,*" and, what is better than all, the careless jingle of a few *reales*, which you allow the light from the chinks to strike upon and glisten in the rain. At length the door is opened, and you have permission to occupy the floor for the night, or perhaps to sling your hammock from the rafters.

To sleep, however, is impossible; the snoring of the Don, who answers with an invariable grunt the hourly scolding of the señora, urging his attention to the natural necessities of a half dozen unsavory brats; the crowing and stirring of fowls overhead, of whose situation you are exactly informed by the laws of gravitation; the shrieking of donkeys, baying of dogs—these, with that indomitable little mailed war-horse of the insect tribe, the flea, render the night more miserable than the day, and make you "hail smiling morn" with a fervor of thankfulness not to be described. You rise at dawn, inhale unspeakable com-



fort from your dear pipe, sip a cup of chocolate or coffee, perform hasty ablutions in the nearest brook, mount, and away again, thridding with renewed courage the dreary, interminable windings of the mountain passes.

At Guaymaca we were thus received, and passed a night such as few can appreciate who have not experienced the like. But at morning, as we issued from the hut, we found an entirely different scene from that of the previous night. The day was clear and still. The storm-clouds had drifted far away to the westward, and a blue sky spanned the little amphitheatre of Guaymaca. An atmosphere of Italian purity and softness invigorated the system, and seemed to nerve us anew for the mountain path. A girl of some seventeen years entered the hut as we were breakfasting. A traveling peddler, with dress patterns, ribbons, and women's trinkets, came in shortly after, and an argument ensued between the two as to *cuatro reales* in the price of a dress which the rural belle wished to purchase for the ensuing "*funcion*." With an eye to a future hospitable reception on our return, I bought it and presented it to the mother, who immediately flew out of doors, and, having rummaged the little town, returned with a dozen eggs, a fowl, and a pyramid of *tortillas*, thus adding greatly to our stock of provisions. The feast of San Diego, they said, should have been celebrated a week before, but the padre had been sick, and there was no one to conduct the appropriate religious ceremonies.

Previous to my lucky strike with the Señora Hipolita, and the compliment to the Niña Alvina, her daughter, I had made a short foraging expedition around the town, consisting of fourteen adobe huts, but with no success.

"This is a land of plenty, señor," said a negress, who, with a child straddled across her hip, stopped to answer to my inquiry for something to eat, "but the grasshoppers have eaten every thing this year."

I applied at a cabin where a barefooted old dame, with gray, straggling hair floating down her face, was sweeping the floor with a brush broom.

"Señor," said she, "we have little to eat here ourselves; this is a time of sad scarcity—*Vaya con Dios!*" and she shut the door, herself the picture of want and misery.

The alcalde I found stretched asleep upon a bench, his hair standing on end "like a hurrah's nest," and his bare feet plastered with pink mud.

"Amigo," said I, with due respect to his office, "assist me in purchasing a few *tortillas* and *frijoles* for my journey."

"Señor," he replied, awaking at my repeated demand, "here we have absolutely nothing to eat. It is a time of terrible scarcity. I fear we must all flee into the valleys below to prevent starvation."

"But," said I, pointing to some strips of beef dried and blackened in the weather, and depending from a pole stretched between two crotched sticks, "here is some dried beef. Will you not sell a morsel?"

"It is impossible," returned the alcalde; "we should starve ourselves. You had best make haste toward Campamento, where I believe there is a little corn and beans." I had just returned from this unsuccessful attempt when the peddler arrived, and the señora rewarded my generosity as above stated.

We rode out of the place, and half an hour brought us once more into the lonely passes of the Cordillera. The sun, already above the woods, shone full upon the tasseled banners of gray moss depending from the branches. The trunks of the trees, coated with silver lichens, gleamed amid the sober foliage, or twisted themselves into fantastic shapes to avoid the rocks rising like ruined castles among them. A great stillness, as if unbroken for ages, lay heavily upon the heights above. We passed reverently through these impressive solitudes, and the eye rested complacently upon diminutive upland flowers peeping from the carpet of damp leaves that strewed the ground, or glanced upward, attracted by the flight of the mountain hawk, disturbed in his solitary domain, swooping away with harsh cries to settle on some distant cliff.

I do not believe that any description can convey a complete idea of the invigorating influence of the fresh morning air of these uplands. The effect is particularly noticeable after a night's rain, which here does not destroy the road, except in the few valleys, and the traveler is thus enabled to enjoy as he rides. It is a positive blessing to breathe. The air goes into the lungs like the passage of pure cold water, but the effect

through the system is like that of laughing-gas. After ten o'clock the heat becomes greater, and for an hour before and after midday it is always desirable to seek the shelter of some thick grove or jutting cliff.

To the northwest of our course, a ridge, known as the *Montañas de Galan*, or the "Beautiful Mountains," stretched along the horizon with a sharpness of outline and an intensity of indigo blue that kept my eyes riveted upon them in silent admiration whenever an opening in the trees or a rise in the path permitted. The whole range, sparkling with the last night's rain, and laughing with sunlight, seemed more like some fancy creation of an artist's pencil than reality. Right out of their centre sprang the cone of Guaymaca, evidently a defunct volcano, judging from its pyramidal shape, and the top broken off by some convulsion of olden times, and now resembling the broken crest of some sugar-loaf carelessly knocked off an inch or two below its apex. Rumbings and mutterings are reported to be heard from that region every few years, and the Guaymacans have traditions of "*mucho humo fuego y cenizas*" vomited forth by the mountain, but these are scarcely reliable. The peak rises about 2000 feet over the plain, and some 4000 above the level of the sea. The Galan Mountains are a continuation of a chain running to the northeast, and forming a great curve some twenty miles to the northward of Guaymaca. This range is known as the *Montañas del Salto*, or *jumping-off place*, from the fact that from their crest commences the descent toward the great coast savannas of the Caribbean Sea. These are actually divided into two chains, the most easterly one being that of the Campamento range, where commence the territories of the great Zelaya family, descendants of the pioneer settler of Olancho, who in the seventeenth century entered these wild solitudes with his stout retainers, under special grant of the Spanish crown, conquered the Indians, introduced the first cattle, and discovered the auriferous nature of the soil.

At noon we reached two grass-thatched huts, known as *el Rancho*, and erected at government expense for the benefit of benighted travelers; and a league farther on we pulled up at a wretched hamlet called *Salto*. The inhabitants, as far as I could judge, consisted of a bedraggled rooster and two hens,

several pigs, lean and vicious, two or three completely naked children, who ran behind the nearest hut as we dismounted, and an old woman. We commenced the usual preliminaries of bartering for a few plantains or eggs, but the old beldame tremulously repeated the usual "no hay!" casting at the same time a glance of apprehension at her little stock of poultry and pork. This was the most utterly wretched place I ever beheld.

To my inquiry as to where the rest of the villagers were, she replied that some had been "caught" for soldiers, others dead, and the rest gone into Olancho for *viveres*. Tossing her a handful of copper coin, for which she ejaculated "God preserve you, sir!" we pursued our course, and descending a path, the rugged steps of which it would be difficult to describe, came upon the waters of the *Rio Rodondo*, which flows to the northeast, and, struggling through a gorge some leagues to the eastward, joins its bright waters with another of equal dimensions, and discharges by a series of cascades into the Guayape. These take their rise in the Salto and Campamento mountains.

I shall not soon forget my sensations on first seeing this noisy little affluent of the famous river I had so long desired to behold. The heat had now become oppressive, and, ordering a general halt, I dismounted to bathe in its inviting waters. This done, we inaugurated the first tangible evidence of the Guayape by a pull at the *botella de aguardiente* all around.

An American flag brought from California I had presented to my friend Don Mariano at Chinandega, and the Señora —, of Tegucigalpa, had replaced it with a specimen of her own manufacture. The red and blue were sewed into a groundwork of white drilling, and the stars as regularly placed as the most patriotic American could desire.

Roberto dragged it out of the *alforjas*, and shouted

"*Viva! la bandera Americana!*" as he flung its crumpled folds to the breeze.

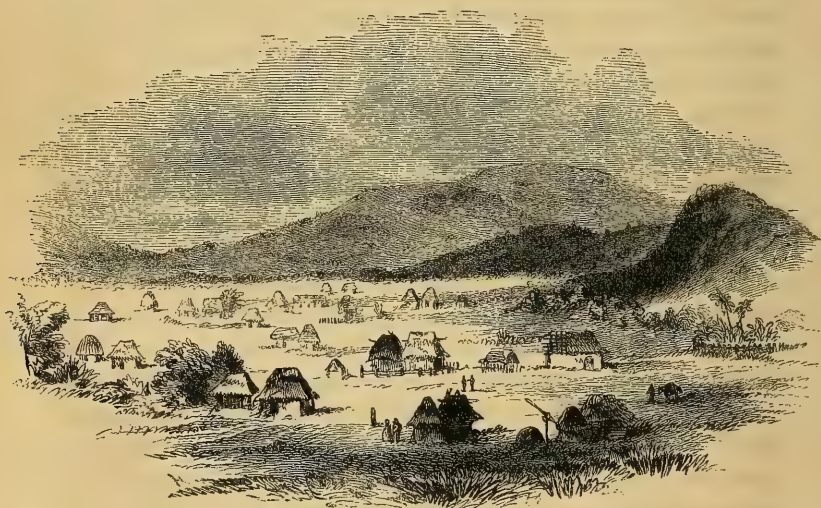
"Well," thought I, as the gaudy affair wriggled in the wind, "in the rush of events, who knows but that flag may yet wave over the broad valleys of Central America?"

Prophetic thought! even as I mused, the contracts of my companion, who had remained in Nicaragua, were *en route* for California, to invite the Anglo-Saxon element into the intestine



wars of that unhappy republic. From Byron Cole's parchment, what a chain of political events have grown! The "*Viva!*" of Roberto was, beyond cavil, the first scream of Young America in his new tropical cradle.

After crossing the *Rio Rodondo* we again ascended some 1500 feet, and opened an extensive plat of table-land gradually sloping to the northeast. We were now in Olancho. The Salto range forms the boundary-line separating that Department from the rest of Honduras. Following the track, which, from the recent infrequency of travel, was now nearly obliterated, we found ourselves going parallel with a stream, winding at last through a deep wood, and into a small valley or plain surrounded by hills, in the centre of which stood the village of Campamento. The elevation of this place is 2500 feet above the sea.



VILLAGE OF CAMPAMENTO.

We dismounted at the door of the largest hut. The proprietress, rejoicing in the name of Señora Maria de Santa Cruz (Mary of the Holy Cross!), appeared on the instant, and asked us to alight in the name of God. Such an unexpected reception augured an abundance of *tortillas* and other eatables, and in a few minutes our mules were unloaded and ourselves discussing the provisions set before us by the landlady.

The population of Campamento, consisting of a mixture of negroes and Indians, about 200 in number, reside within the legal estates of the Zelaya family, but are, of course, under no authority other than that of the supreme government of Honduras. I soon found, however, that they regarded *los Zelayas* as the local sovereigns of all that section of country, being mainly dependent upon them for clothes and the ordinary articles of life, and recognizing "*el General Don Chico*," as they affectionately styled Don Francisco, for their "father" and "*patron*."

The Señora Santa Cruz informed me that the stream we had been following during the afternoon was sometimes called the *Rio Concordia*, emptying into the Guayape; that "*mucho oro*" was taken out on its banks, and that, on the following morning, she would show me a locality where some *lavaderas* were now at work. With this promise I contented myself, and turned into my hammock, slung, as usual, from the rafters. Unable to sleep, I looked forth, and observed the landscape fade away as darkness shut out the mountain heights around. L—— was completely "used up," and could only answer to my remarks with a feeble murmur, showing his desire to sleep. For myself, I was full of excitement. I had passed nearly all day through a region which some years of mining experience in California taught me to believe was gold bearing. I had made careful observations upon the character of the rocks and the nature of the soil.

Auriferous quartz veins are of frequent occurrence in other parts of Central America as well as in Olancho, but in no other portion of the continent, excepting California and Oregon, have there been discovered *placer diggings* superior to those I afterward saw in the Guayape region. The rock formations I had passed during the day are *analogous*, but are not identical, with those on the Stanislaus and other rivers. The differences in soil are accounted for by the denser and richer vegetation of this region. I am disposed to regard the Salto and Campamento ranges as of later formation in point of time, and more disturbed by volcanic interference than those of the Sierra Nevada. The summits over which we had passed were composed of a porous silicious stone, unfavorable to vegetation; but in descending the steeps I had noticed a formation of slate, standing

vertically, similar to those often constituting the bed rock on the Mokelumne River in California. There were often seen large bare places of a species of sandstone, in huge layers and strata, but generally broken into pebbles, and mixed together with millions of pieces of quartz, the whole forming a disintegrated mass like pudding-stone.

The road often cut directly through these layers; where a stream flowed down the mountains, it had almost always forced its way through them, and the bottoms of these rivulets were thus paved with variegated pebbles, among which the white quartz predominated. The whole eastern slope of this dividing range is formed by a mixture of limestone, quartz, and slate. In making the descent our mules often slid for yards, their hoofs slipping over the polished particles. But my simple informants very soon assured me that the Guayape was by no means the only gold-bearing river in Olancho. Every mountain tributary, every "gulch" and cañon, they said, contained its precious deposit.

In Olancho all was "*silencio*," as my informants remarked in illustrating the political and natural quiet reigning amid the solitudes we were passing.

The *mozos* built a fire of pitch-pine knots near the door, and squatting around it, wrapped in their *serapes*, conversed in low tones, smoking corn-husk cigars the while. I dozed fitfully through the night, now and then awakening and observing the shadows of the men reflected on the wall, and the same low hum of their earnest voices. The fire gradually burned out, and as darkness fell on the scene, they stretched themselves on the ground to sleep, with *machetes* by their sides, and their heavy breathing mingling curiously with the peeping of a brood of chickens under wing in the corner. About midnight a herd of cattle tramped past, and then all was quiet but the crackling of the expiring embers.

Although I had ridden since morning—a tiresome jaunt through the mountain passes—sleep fled from my eyelids. I lay wide awake, with a thousand exciting thoughts rambling through my mind: the strange scenery I had passed; the mysterious country, the threshold of which I had already crossed; the gold stories recounted by the men around the fire; the reflec-

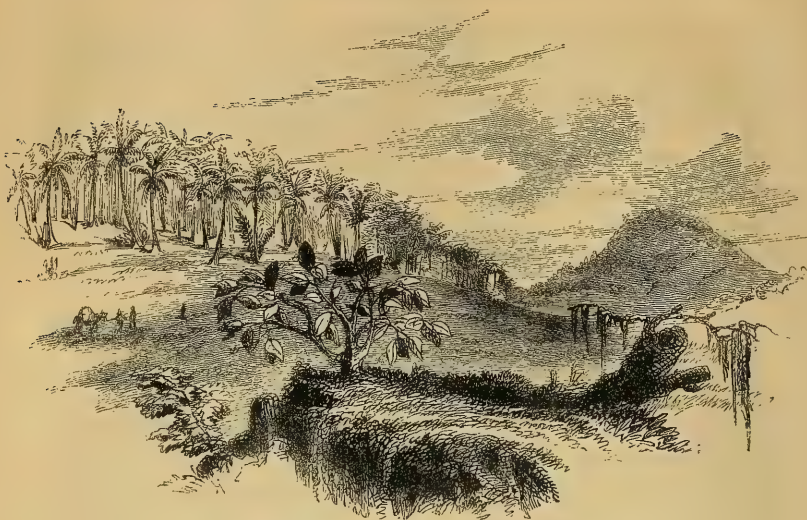
tion that, at last, I had reached the goal of my hopes, and that, from the rude accounts of the simple natives around me, the Guayape, rich as it was represented in the precious metal, was by no means the only "gold river" of Olancho—these were the thoughts that kept me turning uneasily in my hammock. Gradually the ticking of my watch mixed itself with the smothered notes of the *gallinitas*, and I fell asleep to dream of California and friends far away among its deep gullies and mountain forests.

Suddenly a low rumbling, like the discharge of distant artillery, awoke me. The dog sprang to his feet. As the sound was repeated, accompanied by a jarring of my hammock, I remembered that we were in the region of earthquakes, though these were almost as rare in Olancho as in the United States. Roberto turned lazily over on his hide couch, murmuring "*terremoto*," and fell asleep again in a moment. Seeing how unconcerned my companions were, I concluded there could be no danger, but a moment after the house rocked and trembled to its foundation. All hands jumped up at this second shock, ejaculating "*Dios! que es este?*" and the dog emitted a long, dismal howl; but the motion, which seemed a horizontal one, was not repeated. The tremblings felt in Honduras at rare intervals are rather undulations from convulsions taking place in the neighboring states. There are no evidences of volcanic eruptions between Tegucigalpa and the sea-coast to the northward.

A cold fog, more like those of Newfoundland than of tropical climates, hung like a pall over mountain and forest as we issued from the hut in the morning. I wrapped my *poncho* around me, and repaired with L—— to a neighboring hill to sketch the village. "Is this your boasted heavenly climate of Olancho?" I asked. He laughed as he buttoned his coat, and remarked, "Take care you don't get into one of our sierra hail-squalls before you get back!" a remark I was then disposed to dismiss with a smile, but which in after experience became a frigid reality. The thermometer indicated 58° Fahrenheit.

While our scanty breakfast was preparing, I had collected around me a swarthy group of the villagers, and by a few *trai-gitas* of aguardiente, and an encouraging word or two of queries, led them into a narration of some of the principal gold localities





PLATINAL IN THE CAMPAMENTO MOUNTAINS.

of the region. One old woman was brought forward who had dug in one day *eight pounds of gold!* another who had contributed *four pounds* of the precious metal toward building the church at Jutecalpa. One vociferous brawny fellow dragged forward a bright-eyed girl, who had, within a few months, dug and sold at Lepaguare a solid piece of gold weighing three ounces. Old beldames, with bleared eyes and gray, straggling hair, gravely recounted the time-honored legends of the country, mingled with musty recollections of their own personal strokes of fortune. Some smoked the wild tobacco, or, squatting on their hams, gazed with their piercing eyes upon me, turning from time to time to each other with some low-muttered remark. I hugged my *serape* close about me, turned toward the piling mountains to the southward, and tried to realize the scene. Could it be that these poor creatures, apparently destitute of the faculty of invention, were seeking to deceive me in the hope of a reward proportioned to the enlargement of their stories? I listened to their strange narrations, and looked into their meaningless faces, as one suddenly aroused from a dream to the reality of a scene in the "Arabian Nights."

L—— observed my puzzled look. "These," said he, "are the gold-diggers. Are you incredulous, señor?"

"No," I replied; "their account, if not entirely fabulous, which I am not to suppose, must be based upon experience, but I shall be glad to see for myself."

"Wait, then, only till we reach the foot-hills of Olancho."

I was still curious, however, to avail myself as far as possible of the present opportunity, and again addressed the women, who appeared indifferent, but not reluctant, to answer my inquiries. I touched disparagingly the coarse rag which partially covered her bony shoulders, and asked of one, "Why do you not buy, you who dig this gold?"

"I am old, señor; my hands are no longer strong. I go but seldom now to the ravines and rivers."

"The good old colony times are no more," said another, apparently the oldest of the group.

"But what has become of the gold you acquired in those times?"

"Had we not our children to support?" cried one.

"The Church!" "The Blessed Virgin!" "The padres!" chimed in half a dozen; and, crossing themselves hurriedly, they resumed their smoking with the self-satisfied air of having performed the highest duty.

One old beldame, sitting a little apart, turned toward me when the rest were silent, and said, with a sly look, "We do not show all our gold, señor."

"And why?" I asked.

She laughed. "The government would rob us."

Here was something like the systematic beggary of New York. Pressing the matter a little farther, I asked, "Do you bury your gold?"

She took a long whiff, and would say no more.

"It is useless," said L——; "they will never divulge such a secret, unless, indeed, you should perform some wonderful cure among their sick. In that case there would be no limit to their gratitude. But of one thing, my friend, be certain, we are now actually in the gold district of the Guayape."

I asked L—— if he himself believed these women.

"I have lived in Honduras," he replied, "to the age of thirty years, and I have always heard such accounts of this region, but I have never been here until now; but standing here with

you, the purport of whose visit is to throw open these resources to your own countrymen, I realize the enthusiasm with which my fellow-citizen, the great Morazan, always spoke of Olancho. He detested the English, but was always favorable to the enterprises of the Americans and French."

From what I could learn, I judged that the principal deposits of gold were not in the sierras, but below, among the foothills of the Campamento Mountains, to the northeast. Still, as the Rio Concordia flowed near by, I persuaded my new acquaintances to go with me there and wash a few *bateas*, or wooden bowls of sand; the gold hunting is now mainly confined to separating the finer particles from the river sands.

We walked about half a mile to the stream, and two women proceeded to fill their bowls with sand—not taken from the bottom of pits, or "holes," as in California (where the gold is found to work through the superincumbent mass to the bed rock), but ignorantly and carelessly scraped up together. In a few minutes the contents had been reduced by the California "panning" process to about two spoonfuls of black sand, among which I detected the "color," or a few minute specimens of gold, their aggregate value probably not over two cents.

But even these infinitesimal proofs of the wealth concealed in the rocky fastnesses around and beyond affected me more deeply than I could have anticipated. I sat down, and, heedless of the swarthy little group around me, indulged in a reverie that conjured up rainbow-tinted visions, which but *twice* in my lifetime I have dared entertain. Busy thought began to people those gray heights, and I fancied the surrounding solitudes echoing the din of sturdy toil and the rattle of machinery. Involuntarily I sprang to my feet, and felt almost disappointed at again realizing the presence of the listless creatures about me. But this was no time for romance. Returning to the village, we mounted our mules, and, amid the hearty "*Adios!*" of the natives, commenced the descent toward the great plateaus or table-lands of the valley of the Guayape.

Every step took us rapidly downward from among the barren, pine-clad mountains through which, for the past week, we had made but painful and wearisome progress toward a vale of bright-waving verdure, which, contemplated from our elevated

position, possessed all the charms of rural and quiet beauty. We followed the course of the sparkling Guayapita, or little Guayape, which we knew emptied into the larger river below. Elate with the new and beautiful views ever and anon opening toward the eastward, we plunged along, now slipping with the rolling stones, or grasping some overhanging branch to retard the too rapid descent. The mules, weary as ourselves of the inhospitable region we had passed, seemed to gaze wistfully at the enchanting prospect, at times stopping abruptly to cull the delicate blades of grass which began to border the path, and deliberately leaving the track, despite our impatient shouts and unsparing blows.

A clear blue sky spanned the landscape, to which a balmy southerly wind, creeping softly among the trees, imparted just enough life to detract from the almost too sleepy stillness of the prospect. Knowing that before night we could reach Lepaguare, we stopped on several occasions to make sketches of pretty little scenes, and rare and strange trees. Presently we came to the banks of a rapid stream, which, taking its rise in the Tiupacente Mountains toward Yuscaran, flows to the northeast, and discharges into the Guayape about twelve leagues from Jute-calpa. This we afterward learned was the Almandarez, on the head-waters of which some of the largest specimens of pure gold ever found in Olancho had been taken out.

Disposed as I was to reach the goal of my hopes, I could not refrain from pausing to procure a sketch of the river. Here we first saw the famous cattle of Olancho: fat, sleek creatures they were, feeding knee-deep in grass and flowering clover, their lazy motions just discernible on the opposite bank, and seen through the interstices of the *carbon* hedge, whose dark, glutinous leaves contrasted prettily with the feathery foliage of the palms overlooking them beyond.

The scenery, as we advanced, exceeded any thing I had ever seen, both for softness of outline and splendor of coloring. On the plain I found myself traversing a prairie, varied with broad undulations, and covered with deep grass and flowers. Herds of cattle, droves of horses, and the much-prized mules of Olancho, gave life and variety to every new opening of the view. They indicated the source of that primitive wealth and prosper-



ity which has given rule and continuance in this rich nook of the earth to the aristocratic blood of Spain. At intervals the distant but familiar cry of the *vaquero*, or herdsman, dispelled the sense of loneliness attending the traveler in new scenes. All around me a blue horizon of mountains, embracing a wide landscape breathed on by the afternoon wind, and retiring with richest verdure into the hues of autumn, brought vividly to mind the scenery of California, where the foot-hills of the sierras decline westward as do these northward. An ocean of gold and green undulating in the purple tints of sunset!

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## CHAPTER XV.

The Sensitive Plant.—Ferns.—Fleur de Lis.—Bay-trees.—Rio Almendarez.—La Lima.—Rio Guayape.—Hacienda de San Juan.—Valley of Lepaguare.—An Olancho Cattle Estate.—Lepaguare.—General Zelaya.—Our Reception.—An Illumination.—Conversations.—Political Condition of Olancho.—Topography of the Department.—Map-making.—Equestrian Excursions.—The Climate.—Popular Bugbears.—A Landscape.—Route to the Guayape.—Aspect of the Country.—Valley of the Guayape.—“El Murcielego.”—“Las Lavaderas.”—Gold Washing.—Old Machinery.—Native Geography.—“La Maquina.”—Making a Gold-rocker.—The first Cradle in Olancho.—Rich Diggings.—Great Excitement among the Natives.—Evidences of old Mines and Aboriginal Workings.—The Buccaneers.—A Gallop to Barroza.—The five Brothers Zelaya.—Writing a History.

WHILE L—— was preparing his sketch-book, and Roberto and Victor smoking *cigarros* under the neighboring shade, I dismounted to examine some strange vines and bushes with leaves, which I at first mistook for a species of fern. A recent overflow of the river had buried the stems for some distance under the sand, from which, with a vigorous jerk, I attempted to exhume them. In a moment the entire vine presented a spectacle so remarkable that I involuntarily sprang back, half alarmed at what I saw. The leaves, which spread out like whiskers on each side of the stem, slowly contracted, and folded themselves together, as if offended at my rude handling. L——, who was seated on his mule, turned at my exclamation, and, bursting into a laugh, probably amused at my grotesque attitude, shouted, “*La planta sensitiva!*”

The wonder was explained, and I now found, for the first time, that the plant was common in all the table and low lands of Central America; but, as L—— remarked, it was rarely seen in such quantities as here. The vines formed complete mats and hedges for some distance along the river banks. At intervals could be seen the sensitive-*tree*, standing twelve or sixteen feet in height, and resembling the vine in its leaves and irritable disposition. I picked up a stick from among the debris, and dealt the trunk a smart blow, when not only the leaves shrunk away, but the lesser twigs inclined visibly toward the parent stem.

After remounting I passed through thick mats of the sensitive vine, forming a kind of layer, extending, crust-like, a foot above the ground, through which our mules were continually crushing. The ground seemed to squirm with some invisible creatures, the *crinkling* of the hoofs through the mass rather adding to the naturalness of the conceit.

In the denser portion of the woods through which we passed appeared the fern, or common brake, of a small species, with dark, thickly-studded serrated leaves, almost the veritable fern of the North. Growing in tufts, it mingled freely with the grass and prickly vines which every where spread themselves under the trees.

Here, too, we saw specimens of the *fleur de lis* bordering the small streams on our route. The flower, I believe, differs little from that of Europe and North America. I saw some of them at an elevation of more than 1500 feet above the sea. The bay-tree, or laurel, was also frequently seen, and here attains a greater height than at the North, reaching sometimes 40 feet. The trunk is knotty, and in the woods often shrouded with a thin layer of moss, but smooth and clean in the open country. The bark, which is half an inch thick, is white and soft, and of a corky texture, possessing slightly the pungent taste, and affecting the olfactories like *sal volatile*. The laurel is often used in making axle-trees for *caretas*, being one of the hardest and most easily-worked woods in the country. It also burns brightly. Viewed from a short distance, the laurel of Olancho makes a sightly tree, as the branches, though irregular, are thickly studded with smooth, shining leaves, affording a deep shade, which in Cen-

tral America endures the year round. The tree affects damp or wet places, where it grows luxuriantly. I saw no flower or buds upon them, but have no doubt they are identical with the Northern bay-tree.

The Almodarez is counted among the gold rivers of the Department, but the large specimens before referred to were found high up at its sources. I did not learn that any remarkable good luck had attended the *lavaderas* at or near the place where we crossed, which was about two leagues from Campamento. Here we missed the trail, and had reached the little hacienda of La Lima, owned by one of the Zelayas, when a couple of strap-



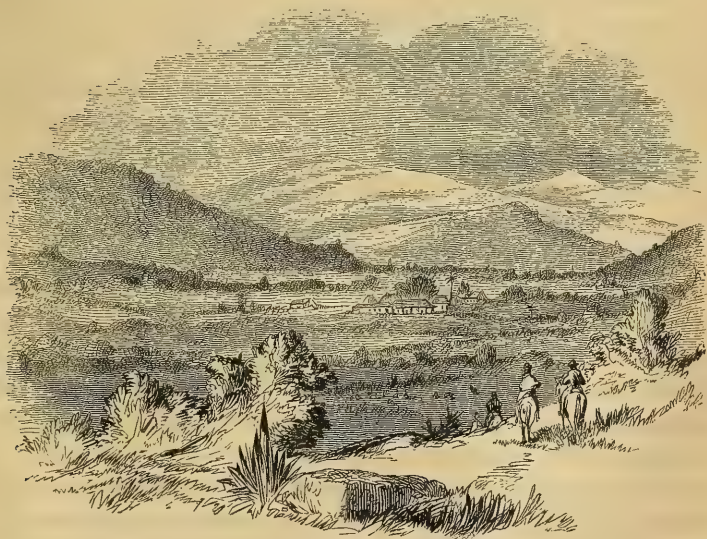
HACIENDA OF LA LIMA.

ping natives met us, and, understanding that we were visitors of "Don Chico," as the general is affectionately termed by the people, very readily directed us to Lepaguare, where their old patron was at present residing. We retraced our steps to La Lima, and, taking the right path, pursued our journey at a rapid trot through scenery already described. After an hour we came out upon the broad and placid Guayape itself, flowing silently toward the sea, and presenting, even at that far-inland point, the appearance of a formidable stream, not less than thirty yards wide.



At this season it is three and a half feet deep at the ford, and above this place receives the waters of several small rivers, as my map indicates. We entered and crossed, wetting our saddle-cloths above the mules' bellies. Flowing through a plain of slightly undulating country, there are no rapids in this vicinity. The river was exceedingly clear, and the yellow sand forming the bottom imparted to the waters a curious but beautiful amber hue. Its course is to the eastward, forming below this ford an extensive semicircle, nearly inclosing the entire Zelaya estates, and trending thence to the northeast, where, after receiving the waters of the Guayambre, a river nearly as large as the Guayape, it assumes its coast name of Patook or Patuca.

From the ford we pursued our route to the northeast, and, passing the hacienda of San Juan, also the property of the Zelayas, we entered an extensive plain or valley hemmed in by low mountain ranges, and known as the Valley of Lepaguare. It is a park of verdure, springing from a deep rich soil, wide enough to sustain the population of a commercial and agricultural state. To the northward stood the great cattle estate of Lepaguare, one of the several belonging to Don Francisco Zelaya, general of brigade and "commandante militar" of the Department of



HACIENDA OF LEPAGUARE.



Olancho, as my letters of introduction to him indicated. The hacienda was backed by feathery foliage, but faced an extensive open space, over which my little cavalcade was advancing. The declining sun cast lengthy shadows along the greensward, the plain extending miles away, and dotted with countless cattle. I had been prepared, from previous accounts, for a scene of rare loveliness; this was the reality.

Grouped trees stood far removed along the valley; the lowing of herds was borne faintly on the evening wind; voices, almost lost in the distance, came from the hacienda; a few horsemen appeared like specks on the plain. We spurred up the mules, and Victor shouted with delight; for myself, I could only gaze and admire. A crowd of children, laughing and screaming, thronged about the gate, but ran hastily away as we approached. Wild mares and half-broken mules, fastened by hide tethers to logs, snorted and started as we jingled past; a noble black stud, with mane and tail flowing in the breeze, sprang away over the soft carpet of grass at the rattle of our spurs; wild-looking cows "blew" at us as we neared them. Crossing the *patio* in front of the house, we drew up at the door. The hacienda, though the largest and best kept in the country, is not an unfair specimen of any of the principal cattle estates of Olancho.

The placid-looking old Indian women engaged about the premises gazed curiously at us as we stopped, and a splendidly caparisoned horse, with silver-mounted *machillas*, *pistoleras*, and crimson *mantillas*, sidled proudly away from our shaggy mountain mules. The door opened, and several men, clad in loose cotton pantaloons and shirt, looked out as we dismounted.

"*Adios, amigos!*" said L——.

"*Buenos dias, caballeros!*" replied half a dozen voices. The master of the house, the venerable Don Francis Zelaya, then appeared, and stepping slowly down, with the peculiar gait of portly persons, advanced to meet us, and in another moment had grasped L—— and myself warmly by the hand, and placed his house and all in it at our disposition.

We found in our host a fair type of the descendant of the old Spanish hidalgos, a lover of good cheer, jolly company, and fine horses. He takes no pride in his hospitality: it is at once a

duty and a pleasure, and the rude accommodations of his residence are ever open to the wayfarer. It may be imagined that, with testimonials from the uttermost parts of the earth, even California, and bearing letters from the governor and other dignitaries, to say nothing of those from the President of Honduras and Nicaragua, my reception was marked with a cordiality not to be forgotten.

The general's limited knowledge of such matters made it difficult for him to mark the geographical or political distinctions of foreign lands, and my letters from Governor Bigler, of California, he regarded as conferring diplomatic powers upon their bearer. To him the Golden State was a separate republic, and its executive a democratic emperor, clad in robes of splendor, and rolling in luxury and gold dust!

Señor Don Chico is literally "monarch of all he surveys." He is tall and handsome, with a portly figure and commanding aspect, blue eyes, square forehead, and crisp, curling hair of iron-gray. In the affairs of his own country he does not lack sagacity or knowledge. There are five brothers, whose families, residing in and occupying by royal grant this portion of Olancho, are known far and wide as "los Zelayas." The early settlement of the department by their ancestor, Señor Don Jeronimo Zelaya, and the political position of affairs subsisting in the country since its first occupation by the Spaniards, I shall make the subject of a future sketch.

We entered the house, and were presented to the señora, who arose from a bed of sickness to receive us, and to the only daughter of the general, a tall, raven-haired *muchacha*, who was evidently mistress of the mansion. The eldest son, Don Toribio, was on his way from Truxillo with a mule-train loaded with cotton goods, the supplying of which to the inhabitants of this section the general monopolizes.

The whole hacienda was speedily in motion with the important event of our arrival. Had I been a public ambassador rather than a private citizen, I could not have been received with greater demonstrations of respect. A flank and quarter of kid was put to roast for us, a fat bullock slaughtered at the sacrificial stake, vegetables from the neighboring garden, pickles with Underwood's brand, *via* Truxillo, from Boston, hot coffee,

*tortillas*, wheaten and corn bread, and wild honey, were among the eatables placed upon the table.

These matters over, my letters of introduction were carefully read by the general. As the old gentleman pored over them with a gratified air, L—— and myself noticed his resemblance to a distinguished member of the cabinet of President Pierce. Don Chico is a great rogue among the women, and the remarkable similarity to be traced in the features of several coffee-colored urchins running about the hacienda led me to suspect that they might claim a close relationship to our entertainer. He yet enjoys his waltz and cotillon in the *funcion* at Jutecalpa with the youngest and gayest rake in the town.

Toward night I observed the *muchachos* of the estate, numbering, I should think, above twenty, bringing in bundles of fagots, dried grass, and branches, which they deposited in heaps throughout the extensive *patio*. As darkness fell over the landscape, these were covered with pitch-pine logs and lighted. The whole hacienda was speedily in a blaze of light. It was an illumination in honor of Don Guillermo. Simple and rude as was the testimonial, I recognized the kindness of Don Francisco, and saw in it a forerunner of future hospitality. He seemed really delighted that the “*silencio*” of his life was to be a while interrupted by *las ultimas noticias* from the outer world.

He seemed to take peculiar interest in my accounts of the progress of California, asking the most minute questions as to the methods of working the mines, the mineral laws, government, climate, and people.

“Ah! my friend,” said he, “God grant that some of the hardy and intelligent men you describe may visit this lonely spot, and show us how to extract the gold which, in our ignorance, we are daily walking over!” Such a remark, coming from the principal man of the department, was to me a conclusive evidence of his desire to introduce industrious Americans into Olancho for the development of the gold placers. The influence of the Zelayas is all that is necessary for the accomplishment of my project, and I addressed myself at once to securing his co-operation and assistance.

Although Olancho is an integral part of the republic of Honduras, its geographical position is such as to have partially ex-

cluded it from a participation in the wars since the independence. Its distinct interests and secluded situation have led the people to avoid as much as possible any but a very limited political contact with the supreme government, a course which has more than once led to hostilities between Olancho and the rest of the republic. These contests, never very severe or bloody, besides resulting favorably to the *Olanchanos*, have disclosed to them their ability to repel attack, and their real independence of the supreme government. The proposition has repeatedly been made to form a separate republic; but with the yielding of the government to their demands, and a promise not to attempt the levying of taxes or conscriptions for soldiers in Olancho, the people, at best too indolent and easy in their habits to attempt a revolution, have acquiesced in the old established government.

Thus, while General Zelaya is the governor of the department by supreme appointment, he is actually at the head of a local democracy, placed there by the spontaneous will of the natives, and from which, were it bold enough to conceive such a proceeding, the supreme power would scarcely venture to remove him. The government is thus a very compact and well-established despotism—a little republic within a republic, with a few forms of election to gratify the middle classes or dependents upon the great landholders.

This middle class, especially in the vicinity and south of Jutecalpa, consists chiefly of the relatives of the Zelayas by descent or intermarriage, a large and powerful family, owning estates comprising some of the most valuable mineral and agricultural lands in Olancho, and, in the aggregate, overshadowing all other landholders in the country. A glance at the map will illustrate the extent of territory covered by their grants, in which are contained gold placers rivaling those of California, and producing spontaneously many of the most valuable tropical products.

The formation of a contract between the proprietors of these rich mineral lands and an association of intelligent Americans should seem to result in throwing open the mines to capital and labor, and the mutual benefit of all.

To my surprise, the general listened to my proposals with



pleasure, but declined entering at once into negotiations. He wished me first to ride with him and his *vaqueros* over the country, and become familiar with its features and resources. Accordingly, I bent myself to the task of surveying, map-making, collecting information, and journeying at intervals from Jutecalpa, the capital, toward the numerous localities more or less famous in its vicinity, and toward the great coast savannas.

My chief object after my coveted contract was to obtain a correct map of a country the topography of which has remained unknown, and which desperate map-makers have filled with mountains, towns, and rivers having no existence, not even in their own imaginations, but placed *ad libitum* to fill unsightly blanks and nameless regions. With this view, before my departure from California I had prepared from the Admiralty charts a correct outline of the coast from the Guatemalan line to Costa Rica, leaving the unknown interior for my future explorations.

It was my custom in all parts of Olancho to spread this upon the rude table, and, with dividers and pocket compass in hand, to inquire of the old natives the direction and distance of certain places. These were noted in pencil, and altered to meet the opinions of the interested crowd, whom I allowed to dispute and contradict each other as to distance and course, silently treasuring every word, and gradually filling my map. This I always had with me in a circular tin case. The oldest residents, many of whom had never been out of Olancho, knew with great accuracy the names of every town, hacienda, and mountain range in the department; and by altering, erasing, comparing, and adroit questioning, I was enabled in a few months to obtain a pretty correct map of the gold region. Of course, it was necessary to make every allowance for inaccuracy in distances, one man's mile being another's league in Olancho; but by carefully noting the positions from all parts of the country of prominent peaks, such as those of Tiupacente, Monte Rosa, Aguacate, El Boqueron, and Guaymaca, all far removed from each other, and lofty landmarks every where visible, I could compare the various bearings, and correct with some degree of certainty the errors consequent upon so rough a reconnaissance. I, moreover, traveled "note-book in hand," and allowed nothing worthy of note to escape me.

My first visit with the general to any mining locality was to the "bar" on the Guayape, a few leagues south of Lepaguare, and known as *El Murcielago*, or the Bat. My kind friend, always alive to my comfort, ordered to be saddled for me a fine Guatemalan horse, his own pet, and, discarding my hard mountain *albardo*, replaced it with a luxurious Mexican saddle. L—— and a favorite *vaquero*, by name Julio, completed the party of four. The morning was actually cold, though the blue vault overhead looked mild and soft as an Italian sky. The general insisted on my testing the quality of some aguardiente upon which he rather prided himself. It had come from Tegucigalpa. We cantered merrily over the plain of Lepaguare, where the brisk air and wide expanse of grassy undulations set our hearts in tune with the exhilarating influence of the hour.

Let no geographer with indefinite ideas of the "terrible tropics" select the table districts of Olancho for the theme of his anathemas against pestilential climates. Nothing is more absurd, or farther from truth, than our popular dread of these unknown "regions of the tropics." The sandy horrors of Sahara or the Colorado are not here. Here the sun neither kills the wanderer nor parches up his blood; the earth is warm, but not infectious. Throughout all the new countries of our Western States a local unhealthiness is prevalent, and hard to be resisted, but scarcely any fevers prevail in the interior of Honduras. The bilious fevers so often fatal to strangers are confined to the low, damp lands of the coast.

The summer or wet season is by no means, as many suppose, a continued fall of rains. A succession of quick showers and thunder-storms, with intervals of brilliant sunshine, make up the season. The rain will fall all night in torrents, with lightning, thunder, and wind—alarms, but not destroying—swelling the rivers and their muddy mountain affluents, which again subside to their natural limits as the sun bursts forth through the clouds of morning over a landscape richly and tenderly diversified with green and gold. A warm air charms the sense; the eyes are pleased, but not dazzled with gorgeous tints reflected by the glittering moisture, and the curtain-work of silver and purple clouds, fading gradually as the day advances, makes these lovely pictures seem near and more familiar to the beholder. Says the proverb,

"*Olancho, ancho para entrar angosto para salir!*" "Olancho, easy to enter but hard to leave." Have not these delicious scenes given rise to the saying?

As I remember how, wearied with the gray, sober mantle with which Nature clothes herself in the lonely mountains on the route to Tegucigalpa, we eagerly precipitated ourselves toward the glowing landscape spread invitingly below, so, vividly do I recall the time, months afterward, when, turning many a fond, lingering look back, I reluctantly shut out from view—perhaps forever—the peaceful valley of Lepaguare.

We passed, on our route to the Murcielago, the haciendas of Don Jose Manuel Zelaya, the oldest of the brothers, and also that of Don Carlos Zelaya, a married son of the general. Here we met several well-mounted *vaqueros*, herding a number of horses and mules. There is a level cart-road the entire distance from Lepaguare to the foot of the range of hills forming the valley through which the Guayape flows. From here the road becomes a very good mule-path, over which any class of machinery can be packed or even carted with slight improvement to the Murcielago. The route was through forests of pines, some of them three feet in diameter. These are of the yellow and white varieties.

During this trip I noticed, for the hundredth time, the regularity which gives these hills their unequaled grace of form. The line of beauty, as in the rounded foot-hills of the California gold regions, was here so perceptible that I repeated the remark at every new prospect. Wood-crowned and even, an almost insensible gradation, range beyond range, west, north, and south rises an amphitheatre of grassy elevations, aspiring hills, lofty ranges, and, farther still, peaks of such a blueness they seemed solid ether, as though the liquid atmosphere had been mixed with light and crystallized in airy glaciers.

The pine growth, skirting the hills far as the eye could reach, seemed well adapted to milling purposes. As we passed among them, the wind roared grandly among their tops, and brought vividly to mind similar scenes in California; but the pines of the uplands are not comparable in size with those of the North, though the gigantic cedars of the lower country are the wonder even of the natives themselves.

Some small tributary of the *Quebrada de Garcia* was pointed out to me on our road, where several women had washed the sands with considerable success. Here the country began to break up into cañons and gulches, like those around the vicinity of Grass Valley and French Corral in California. At the bottom of these places appeared slate and quartz formations, among which we noticed where the gold-seekers had *scratched*, leaving marks resembling those made by some industrious barn-yard fowl rather than the sturdy marks of mining labor. No digging of any account has ever been done here, and the gold is mostly of that description easily washed away by any heavy flow of water. The general promised to return here with a few *lavaderas*, and have the ground properly worked under my directions.

After passing a great number of California-looking gulches and streams, all known to be auriferous, we came upon a superb pine-clad hill, overlooking the valley of the Guayape, which we heard roaring below, but as yet hidden from view by the dense belt of foliage lining its course. This was about five leagues, by the *vueltas del rio*, below the place where I had crossed it on first entering Olancho.

We pushed impatiently along, the Don explaining and talking all the way. We followed the ridge to the southward, seeking a cleared space through which to descend. From our position I noted the bearing and apparent distance of the principal mountain peaks within thirty leagues. The path gradually sloped out into a pretty little plain about twenty feet above the river, and known as the Murcielago. Here is a hut belonging to Don Chico, and here it had been proposed by Señor Cacho to erect a small mining town, under the auspices of a native company, which was afterward broken up by some one of the revolutions. The place was now a mere ruin of adobes and branches. A number of squash and pumpkin vines, the fruit still visible among the old rafters and rank grass, clambered around the place. A herd of cattle stood lazily browsing in the shade, and, with the audible roaring of the river and the freshness of the foliage, reminded me of a summer New England scene. From here we scrambled down to the river, which opened as we descended from amid a grove of fragrant pines, their sombre shadows cast full upon the waters below.





MURCIELAGO BAR.

The echo of voices among the rocks farther up the river indicated the presence of *lavaderas*, although this is not the most favorable season for their labors. We followed the bank for a few hundred yards, and at last came upon a party of women gold-seekers, splashing about in the water, laughing boisterously over their labor, some singing, and others smoking the indispensable *cigarro*. They were standing knee-deep, and each bending over the customary large circular bowl or *batea*, in which the precious metal was being washed out. They worked slowly and with no intelligence, stopping at every moment to chat over the topics of their little world, and performing perhaps one third as much labor as an American miner. An offer from the general, backed by myself, to buy all the gold they could wash on that day and the next, did not seem to quicken their operations.

The women obtain a permission of the Zelayas before they can work the placers; this formality, which they scrupulously exact, is owing to the family jealousy of their ancient possessions, and the fear that any infringement upon them might eventually lead to the "squatting" of unprincipled persons upon their territories. Any such interlopers, it is true, could be speedily ejected, but the general, not unwisely, enforced the proverb, "An

ounce of prevention," &c. Any women found washing gold without permission were invariably expelled, and never thereafter allowed to work on the estates. These summary proceedings have given rise to a statement among the enemies of *los Zelayas* that they have forced the *lavaderas* to pay as tribute a portion of their earnings, which is untrue.

An immense fat, good-natured Indian woman whispered an inquiry to Julio as to who the strangers were, to which he replied that I was intending to buy the entire Zelaya possessions, and had come from California to view the gold washings. They had all heard of the famous land of gold, and I easily drew them into conversation on the subject. At my request they continued their labors, from which, as we approached, they had straightened themselves up, and, throwing their coarse hair back from their faces, shouted, "Buenos dias, Don Francisco!" the general replying gayly to them from his huge Mexican saddle, and with a peculiar smile, which made me suspect he was a particular favorite with them. The operation of washing, or "panning," is precisely similar to that witnessed among the *Chilenos* and *Sonoreños*, who in the early days flocked from Spanish America into California. In several of the *bateas* there remained not a particle of gold, or if any there were, in such minute specks as to be invisible; in others there might be from two to three cents, and in a very few perhaps double that amount. The particles were not scale-like, but round and irregular, averaging the size of a pin-head, and polished by attrition. One piece was taken out worth above half a dollar.\*

\* Oviedo's account of the *lavaderas* in Veragua is thus quaintly translated in Richard Eden's English version of that historian, published in London in 1577: "These washers, for the most parte, are the Indian women, because this woorke is of lesse paine and travayle than any other. These women, when they washe, are accustomed to syt by the water syde, with theyr legges in the water even up to the knees, or lesse, as the place serveth theyr purpose; and thus holdyng the trays with earth in theyr handes by ye handles thereof, and puttyng the same into the water, they move them rounde about after the maner of sytting, with a certayne aptnesse, in such sort that there entreth no more water into the trays than serveth theyr turne; and with the selfe-same apte movyng of theyr trays in the water, they ever avoyde the foule water with the earth out of the one side of the vessell, and receyve in cleane water on the other syde thereof; so that by this meanes, by litle and litle, the water washeth the earth, as the lyghter substaunce of the trays, and the golde, as the heavier matter, resteth in the bottome of the same, beyng rounde and holowe in the myddell like unto a

The river at this season was not at the most favorable stage for washing. At extreme low water, pieces weighing five and even eight ounces have been taken from the bed at this point. I afterward purchased in Jutecalpa pieces weighing about an ounce, which I took with me to California. These I procured of the *tienderos* or shop-keepers, who had received them in trade from the women. They had no reason to deceive me as to the locality from which these *chispas* were obtained, and always represented them as coming from the Guayape and its tributaries, but especially from the foot-hills of the Campamento range to the Almacigueras, a locality famous throughout Olancho as the richest in the department.

I inquired of the general if any machinery had ever yet been introduced into Olancho. "No," he replied, "with the exception of a box of it which has been at my hacienda these ten years, brought there by the agent of Señor Wellaes, from Guatemala, who once entered into a contract with me to take hold of these mines 'with a will.' The machinery was constructed in Boston to order, shipped to Truxillo, and brought thence over the mountains here; but the directions were in English, which I could not read. Señor Wellaes died, some pieces of iron were lost, and I confess that I have not thought about it since." This bit of information surprised me, and I resolved to examine the *maquina* on my return. I had seen enough already to convince me that in Olancho there is another California, but that, like that country, the glittering treasures of the soil must remain as they have been since the creation until a race superior in energy and activity succeed to the inheritance.

I also saw that no estimate could ever be formed of the mines under the present crude system of working them, and that some machinery, even were it the discarded cradle of California's early days, would be necessary to make any reliable experiments. With this view, I determined to construct a rocker on my return to the hacienda, could tools and materials be obtained, which was extremely doubtful, and in the event of a failure at such rude mechanism, to see what could be done with the *maquina* of the above-mentioned Guatemalan adventurer.

barbar's basen. And when all the earth is avoyded, and the golde geathered together in the bottome of the tray, they put it aparte, and returne to take more earth, whiche they washe contynually as before."



We remained some hours at the Murcielago, examining and consulting upon its advantages as the site for a future mining village similar to that of Aleman. A comfortable repast and smoke under the trees doubtless added to the zest with which we viewed the rare scenery around. Our dinner was taken at a point some five hundred yards above the adobe hut, where the beach is approached between causeways of black rock dwindling down toward the water's edge, and spreading out into a smooth beach, where the tiny surf created by the current sparkled in rims of silver, breaking among the grass that carpeted it quite to the river's brink. The Guayape is here deep and silent, though rapid, heavy trees standing at intervals along the banks; islands of rocks and bushes close "in-shore" on both sides; layers of slate and sandstone slanting into the stream; the rays of the western sun shedding golden streaks across the water, and small patches of sunlit woods, interspersed with sober pines, relieving the background. All was still as "a thousand years ago."

The general course of the river is here to the N.N.E. Julio, who had lived in the vicinity above thirty years, gave me the distance by bends of the river from Las Marias to Catacamas. He was familiar with it, having often passed the entire distance in canoes. I took down his figures with an air of great interest, and was afterward amused with finding that the aggregate of Julio's leagues would take me beyond the mouth of the Patook, far into the Caribbean Sea! I mention this fact, which is a fair sample of the accuracy of the natives in matters of distance, to illustrate the difficulty of forming a map with the data of the inhabitants for a guide. The explorer must rely entirely upon his own observations. As I have said above, a good wagon road can be easily constructed from the Murcielago, as well as from numerous other rich localities on the Guayape, to Lepaguare, from which point a coach and six could be driven through Jutecalpa *as it now is*, and many miles below it; but the topography, as well as the climate, population, history, and natural products of Olancho, although treated as occasion seemed to require through these pages, I have more particularly referred to in chapters dedicated to those subjects.

The sun was far in the western horizon when we turned our



horses toward Lepaguare, and, after a slow ride in the darkness over a country apparently familiar to my companions, but to me a confused tumble of hills and forests, we observed the distant lights of the hacienda. As we approached, we heard the jingle of spurs and tramping of horses' hoofs; these, and the frequently-passing forms between us and the great brushwood fire burning in the *patio*, showed that some unusual commotion was taking place. Don Chico spurred to the spot, where were several mounted *vaqueros* preparing to go in search of their master, who, they thought, might have been lost in the woods. At his appearance all dismounted, and the hacienda subsided into its wonted quiet.

On the following morning, after breakfast, I intimated to the general my desire to see the machine he had mentioned. Calling to some of the lounging fellows usually loafing about the door, he ordered to be dragged from its hiding-place an old box, nearly the size of a common piano. It was covered with cobwebs, and its cracks swarmed with cockroaches and nondescripts with "eleven legs and no heads," who hastened out of sight as their habitation was thus rudely disturbed.

One of the men pried off the top, and revealed to my expectant gaze an intricate mass of wheels, sieves, rollers, strainers, grooved bits of wood, and cylinders, enough to puzzle the inventive genius of any but a practiced machinist to put together.

The whole household crowded silently around, eagerly watching my face, whispering at intervals to each other, and doubtless admiring the wise look which, for the occasion, I was forced to assume. In vain I placed the pieces together, arranged, pulled apart, and readjusted. I might as well have undertaken to make a chronometer; but, as my reputation was at stake, I took care to conceal my defeat, and, shaking my head depreciatingly, ordered the boys to replace the machinery, as totally inapplicable to gold-washing. The general looked sadly disappointed, and wondered how Señor Wellaes could ever have ordered such a jumble of useless puzzle to wash gold with. But, although my mechanical knowledge was not equal to the *maquina* of the *Guatemalteco*, I found in the box what I had in vain looked for about the hacienda, boards and nails enough for the construction of a rocker à la *California*.

The machine above-mentioned, I saw, was one of the numberless nameless affairs emanating from the brains of inventors ignorant of the requirements of mining apparatus. California, in the early days, was full of them. There seemed to be nothing within the range of possibility or probability which the mechanics of the Eastern States and England did not send to California. The mule-paths to the more distant mining localities are yet strewn with them. The cobweb of wheels and rollers at Lepaguare was intended as a sand-sifter, and was apparently as inapplicable to the separating of the precious particles from the earth as a patent churn or threshing-machine would be. Dear-bought experience has at last taught the Californians that the great desideratum in mining machinery for placer-washing, sluicing, or quartz-crushing, is simplicity. The same system introduced into Olancho can not fail to make available the glittering treasures stored in its soil, rocks, and river beds.

The general placed the contents of the box at my disposal, and I commenced putting together a rude machine, such as was used in the primitive days of California. A trough, roughly hewed out of a *nispero*-tree, serving as a feeding-dish for young colts, I took as the body for the rocker. This I hewed down from its unwieldy proportions, and the *maquina* of Señor Welles furnished the sifter. As the uncouth affair gradually assumed shape and meaning under my hands, the puzzled looks of the silent crowd yielded to those of wonder and simple delight. The women particularly praised my skill, and wondered that a *caballero* could also handle the saw and hatchet. Before night my bantling was completed, and, after chiseling in huge letters, "ROCKER NO. I, OLANCHO, 1854," with my initials below, we bore the thing down to the brook near the hacienda, and commenced an experimental washing. The bed-pieces were placed, and some of the children of the estate flew, at the general's command, to carry water and sand. This stream is not gold-bearing, and half an hour's labor produced no sign of gold, but the *modus operandi* was explained by the operation.

"*Caramba!*" exclaimed the delighted old man; "how wonderful! we shall get gold by the pound!"

I smiled at his enthusiasm, and reminded him that this was only a primitive method, now nearly discarded throughout Cal-

ifornia, having given place to a gigantic system of mining, by which entire hills melted away before the industry of the Americans, washing tons of earth where five years ago they washed panfuls! My audience listened in silence, and the general remarked,

“Ah! Don Guillermo, your countrymen are, beyond doubt, destined to rule the world; such progress in the useful arts is astonishing, and none of the old races can ever hope to compete with you. I only fear that your friends may not credit the stories you will one day recount of Olancho, and that the enterprising men of *el Norte* may refuse to visit us. If you never return with your great company, I shall feel that my dear Olancho will never become known to the world.”

I assured the kind-hearted old man that many years would not elapse before the Americans would visit the country.

We left the machine to swell in the water, and on the following morning at dawn, a train of mules, carrying the rocker, provisions, and implements, started for a point near the Murcielago, we remaining for breakfast, and expecting to overtake them before they reached the bar. On our route we conversed upon the numerous gold localities of the country. The general agreed with me that not a hundredth part of the richest deposits had yet been discovered, and that “prospecting” would gradually develop them. Arrived at the bar, we found the cradle deposited after my instructions carefully on the bank, and the natives, in their usual costume of a shirt, cotton trowsers, and sash, stretched half asleep under the trees. In a few minutes the machine was placed and the operations commenced. For half an hour the men brought large bowls of earth from a spot indicated by a *lavadera* who accompanied us. Julio rocked, Victor poured on the water, the general berated or threatened them as his excited feelings dictated, all chatted, disputed, and watched my every motion, while I, barefooted and with pantaloons rolled up, splashed about in the river, ever and anon peeping into the machine to find some indication of gold. Once or twice only I observed a minute speck glittering on the bottom, and I was just giving vent to my disappointment, when I discovered that the careful Victor had pulled out the plug, and that through the hole had escaped whatever treasure might thus far have been





FIRST ROCKER IN HONDURAS.

collected. The general stamped and scolded while the aperture was being closed, and after half an hour's labor I ordered another inspection. Along the lower riffle I observed a few *chispas* sparkling among the black metallic sand. The plug was now pulled out, and the *lavadera*, placing her bowl below, caught the contents of the rocker as it was carefully washed down. This she reduced by the rotary process already described, and as we bent over her I could not repress an exclamation of delight at seeing the little hollow space at the bottom yellow with the golden particles. I estimated their value at a trifle below a dollar and fifty cents.

Don Chico was altogether too excited to utter any thing beyond ejaculations. A smile of triumph which he observed on my face made him step toward me and grasp my hand, while the natives gazed alternately upon me and my rocker with silent wonder.

"Wait, my dear general," I said, "until we introduce the 'hydraulic mining' now used in California into these mines, and instead of panfuls of earth you will see the very hills disappearing, from which every particle of gold will be saved by means of quicksilver; and in the place of half a quillful of dust for a day's labor you will estimate the product by pounds."



The experiment decided me, and I resolved never to leave Olancho until I had entered into a contract with the general for the introduction of American capital and labor into the country. It should be borne in mind that the earth used on this occasion was not taken from the bottom of excavations near the "ledge rock," as in California, to which place, in the lapse of centuries, the heavy metal is known to work its way, but from near the surface, where a California miner would scarcely look for gold except by the newly-discovered process of "ground sluicing." The general led me to a shallow excavation on the upper level of the bar, which by the river is only reached during a freshet, where, at twenty feet above low water, the *lavaderas* took out several pounds of gold in six days' washing. This was at a time when a large sum was required for the building of the new church at Jutecalpa, the women contributing by labor as well as gold to its construction.

Our conversation now turned upon the *tiempos antiguos*, when it is said large amounts of gold were extracted from the valley of the Guayape, and sent to enrich the nobility of the mother country. The old Spanish chronicler, Herrera, makes mention of the Guayape and its golden treasures. The general had heard of these accounts, but his limited reading had never gone beyond the perusal of the political pamphlets and newspapers of the country. I mentioned the buccaneers, and alluded to my researches among old volumes of the Spanish library at Tegucigalpa, belonging to my friend, Don Manuel Ugarto. My companion listened attentively.

"Follow me, and I will show you," said he, "the old mines where the Spaniards used to take out gold." He wheeled his horse, leaping a fallen tree in a manner which I dared not imitate. So, making a circuit, with much difficulty I forced my horse up the bank after him.

On a slope more than sixty feet above, I found him standing near some large and deep pits (holes) partially filled with earth. They were four in number. Heaps of stones and earth, matted with grass and vines, lay near their mouths, and trees of near a century's growth, rooted in the bottom of the pits, indicated their great antiquity. These venerable excavations reminded me of similar places along the Stanislaus and South Yuba.

“Twenty years ago,” said the general, “we took out rusted tools and bars of iron of Spanish manufacture, left here more than a hundred years before. Stories,” he continued, “are yet handed down among the Indians toward Catacamas that ancient implements, made by the aborigines, who worked here long before Columbus discovered America, were found there by the old Spaniards. The gold that went to adorn the splendid palaces of Palenque, Copan, and Chichen, doubtless came from the valley of the Guayape and other parts of Olancho. From this kind of pit, in the old time, while Honduras was a Spanish province, the gold was taken that freighted the Spanish galleons. Had Spain been faithful to us, she would not have been poor, as she now is. The entire coast, from Balize in Yucatan to San Juan del Norte in Nicaragua, became a resort for robbers—buccaneers. The English of the West India islands allowed them to wage war against the colonies of Spain. Not a ship could sail, I have been told, from Truxillo or Omoa without falling into their hands. They leagued themselves with the Mosquitos or Sambos of the coast, supplied them with weapons, pensioned their chiefs, and encouraged them to a perpetual war upon Nicaragua. These circumstances prevented the continued development of our gold mines.”

In this strain the general proceeded, pointing, as we rode, to the openings in the trees, or to growths of a more recent date, where the early adventurers had cut pathways from their workings to the river, or to traces of even more ancient aboriginal excavations. These last are found in numerous localities on the Guayape and its tributaries, as well as along the course of the Quebrada de Oro, the Mangulile, Mirojoco, Sulaco, and Silaca, tributaries of the Aguan and other rivers discharging through the Department of Yoro into the Caribbean Sea.

On our return to Lepaguare from the Murcielago, we bore the rocker, snugly packed on a mule's back, to be used in future operations in other localities; but, as will hereafter appear, I was unable to make the experiments I had proposed except in a very unsatisfactory and imperfect manner. My rocker has probably, by this time, fallen to pieces, or, what is more likely, passed into the hands of some of the adventurers who have since visited the gold regions of Olancho.

As we approached the hacienda of Barroza, the residence of the youngest brother, Don Lorenzo Zelaya, *alcalde primero* of Jutecalpa, we were met by a splendidly-mounted party, who came leaping their horses with wild freedom over the sward toward us. These were Don Lorenzo himself, accompanied by Don Carlos Zelaya, the general's oldest son, and their usual attendants. Hearing from one of the *vaqueros* of our visit to the Murcielego, and probable return by the way of Barroza, they had prepared a grand dinner for our reception. The little cavalcade reined suddenly up when almost upon us, and the ceremony of introduction was quickly performed. Lorenzo bore the features of the old general, but without his nobleness of expression. He is said to be the pet of the family, and the affectionate regard manifested toward each other by these uncultivated and simple aristocrats of Olancho affected me at times more deeply than I should be willing to admit.

The hacienda of Barroza is by no means the picturesque spot I had supposed it to be from a distant view, but within we found all the hospitality so famous among the *Olanchanos*. We decided to remain all night. Here I met the venerable Jose Manuel, Santiago, and Jose Maria Zelaya, who, with the general (Francisco) and Lorenzo, the "youngster" of the quintette, made up the family. A faithful account of the stories and legends recounted here of the gold placers in the surrounding hills, interspersed with historical and other interesting facts, would have made in itself a readable and instructive volume. It was, however, difficult to enjoy and appreciate this bounteous hospitality, and be, at the same time, a "chiel amang them takin' notes." Long after midnight, when all else had retired to sleep, I sat smoking with Don Santiago, "*Juez de Primero Instancia de Olancho*," who, in his official capacity during many years, had become stuffed with valuable information in relation to the history and topography of the country. To him I am indebted for a history of Olancho, its early settlement, and the progress of the Zelayas and other leading families from their entrance into the country up to the present time. Don Santiago is the "learned brother" and the oracle of the rest of the family in all legal, scientific, or historical matters. His grave expression, refined cast of countenance, and ample forehead overshadowed by black, curling

hair, betoken a man of fine abilities, and who elsewhere might have made an enduring name. It was long after midnight when, with fingers cramped and eyes smarting from the effects of the dim tallow candle by which I had taken down his lengthy historical resumé, I bid him good-night, and joned the sleeping crowd.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

A Ride in the Valley of Lepaguare.—A “bueno Jinete” of Olancho.—The Vanilla Vine: how it grows.—Susceptible of Cultivation.—The Vanilla Trade.—Productions of Olancho.—Wild Berries.—Another Excursion.—Hacienda de Galeras.—Wild Horses.—Mounted *Vaqueros*.—The Road to El Rio Moran.—Falls of the Moran.—Deer and Antelope.—The Temperature.—Coast Fevers.—Ho! for Jutecalpa.—Galeras again.—A Birth-day Dinner.—Mammoth Table-top.—Sheep and Wolves.—The Vale of Paradise.—Dissolving Views.—Golden Rhapsodies.—A Bath with the Mocking-birds.—Leaving Galeras.—Kindness of the Zelayas.—The Start for Jutecalpa.

ON the following morning, having breakfasted, we remounted and returned to Lepaguare. I got out my traveling writing-desk, and commenced putting to paper the facts I had already obtained. The general and his family preserved a respectful silence while I was thus occupied, and the women chid the noisy Indian children who were frolicking outside. When I had completed my work, and made such additions to the map as my conversations with Don Santiago had suggested, Don Francisco proposed that we should ride to the vicinity of Cerro Gordo, where were growing a number of vanilla plants, and which I had expressed a desire to see. He also thought it possible that his second son, Don Toribio, might be expected from Truxillo, where he had been absent two months to purchase *mantos* and a general assortment of dry goods. He had a train of twenty mules, which had gone down to the coast loaded with cheese, one of the great productions of Olancho.

Behold us now mounted on the spirited *caballos de Uloa*, the finest breed in Olancho, and moving along the emerald plain toward the picturesque Cerro Gordo. The acquired pace of the Olancho horse is the quintessence of ease and delightful motion, and, beneath the comfortable Mexican saddle, seems to carry the rider along with as little perceptible motion as a boat gliding



over the gentle undulations of a lake. It was a great compliment from the general that he had ordered to be saddled for me his favorite, a large black horse kept for particular occasions. The beautiful creature had an eye almost human in its intelligence, and his glossy, well-filled coat attested to the fond care of his owner. He was the only animal in the *caballeria* that had ever been shod; the shoes, however, carelessly fastened by some bungling native blacksmith, had long since been cast.

No words can express the exhilaration and joyous sense of freedom experienced in a journey among the valleys of Olancho, the rider inhaling health with every breath, and each sense elate with pleasure. At the time of my visit the rains had nearly ceased, leaving all nature sparkling with the rich green so seldom seen out of an English rural picture. The higher lands of the department had donned a somewhat gayer dress than they were wont to wear, while the marshes and plains, wherever wooded, glowed in the sunlight with the freshest, purest green.

Don Francisco was counted the best horseman in Olancho, owing partly, perhaps, to the dignified and patriarchal appearance he offered when mounted. But, aside from this, as his horse (a fine bay) curvetted in advance of the little party, I could but admire the ease of the rider, as with long accustomed muscles he swayed gracefully to the lithe motions of his noble animal, his portly form completely filling the saddle, and his features shaded with a broad-brimmed *sombrero de Guayaquil*. At times, in the course of conversation, which flowed rapidly, excited by the beauty of the scenery and the enlivening motions of the horse, he would turn partly round to address me, gesticulating with that animated dignity almost inseparable from the well-bred *caballero*.

In truth, if the old man had a weak point, it was in his reputation for horsemanship, regarding which he was ever jealous and easily flattered. His brother, Don Santiago, had once enjoyed the name of being *el mejor jinete de Olancho*, a reputation not valueless, where to be an indifferent rider is the exception to the rule; but, since a fall he had received some years previous while breaking a wild mare, Don Francisco had taken precedence. To be a fine rider in Olancho does not imply the mere ability to mount and retain the seat on a wild colt just

from the untamed *manada*—a trick familiar to half the lounging brats about the haciendas. The term *bueno jinete* is usually accorded to the most graceful and dexterous manager of the horse, combining an easy carriage with the numerous feats done by a slight pressure of the rein, calculated to display the best points of the animal.

I know of no more admirable sight than an "*Olanchano de familia distinguida*" mounted on one of these strong, well-knit horses, broken to the severe Spanish bit, his erect form placed in the saddle like a monument, his toes just resting in the stirrups, the particolored *serape* flowing becomingly over the shoulder, his swarthy face glowing with conscious pride from under the flapping hat, set jauntily on one side, and the *tout ensemble* of man and horse a picture of ease and democratic freedom rarely to be seen except in the *pampas* of La Plata or the *ranchos de ganado* of California.

About two leagues from Lepaguare we crossed a small river, and, ascending the opposite bank, came upon a wild piece of table-land covered with copses, among which we paused to examine the vanilla, here clambering up the trunks of the trees, sometimes to a distance of forty feet from the ground. The natives of Olancho are totally ignorant of the method of culture pursued in Mexico. Don Jose Manuel Zelaya had been in Mexico when a young man, but had forgotten the way of propagating it. In the small town of Pespire, next to Nacaome, an attempt was once made to cultivate the vanilla, and with encouraging success. The place is on the Pacific slope, and but little elevated above the sea. Cuttings about a foot in length are inserted in the bark of the tree upon which the vine is designed to climb, where it soon commences to grow.

About twenty *arrobas* only are annually gathered in the woods of Olancho, most of which is taken to Tegucigalpa, where it is prepared for the market. A small quantity also finds its way to Balize, Truxillo, and Omoa. A very lucrative business may be carried on in all parts of Honduras by offering a trifle beyond the usual price, which would command the greater part of what is gathered. The flowers are of a greenish yellow mixed with white. But of the three varieties of the vanilla found in Honduras, that known as *la fina* is the most

esteemed. The longer and narrower the pods, the greater appears to be their value. Señor Losano, of Tegucigalpa, showed me about fifty pounds of three classes, which he was preparing for the fair of San Miguel. Much of this was gathered in Olancho and Yoro. For this he had paid from a *medio* ( $6\frac{1}{4}$  cents) to a *real* ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents) per pound, according to quality. Being the principal dealer in that vicinity, it was customary to bring the fruit to him from a considerable distance around Tegucigalpa, the small collectors preferring to realize at the local prices than to send, on their own account, to the market.

At the fair of San Miguel vanilla sells at from two to four dollars of silver. About thirty *quintales* are annually gathered in Honduras and San Salvador. The plant affects two trees in Olancho, the *Indio desnudo* and the *Guachipalín*. The vanilla of Olancho is probably that described by the botanist Miller as the *Vanilla axillaris*, and is described as occurring in Carthagena, New Spain, where it grows naturally. It has a climbing stalk, sending out roots from the joints, and mounting to a great height. The leaves, which come out singly at each joint, are oblong, smooth, and jointed. The flowers protrude from the side of the branches; they are shaped like those of the great Bee-Orchis, but longer. The helmet is of a pale pink, and the lip purple. The vanilla vine is found from Mexico through Central America to Darien. The pods grow in pairs, and are generally of the thickness of a child's finger, and about five or six inches in length. They are green at first, then yellowish, and turn of a brownish cast as they ripen. The stalk is moderately slender, and throws out a long, winding tendril opposite to each of the lower leaves, by which it adheres to the branches or bark of the tree; but after it gains the top these become useless, and the place of each is supplied by a fellow-leaf. The birds of the country are represented as greedily devouring the ripe seeds. The method of curing the pods is quite simple. When they begin to ripen they are gathered and laid to ferment in heaps for several days. After being dried in the sun for an equal length of time, during which they are often touched with palm oil, they are a second time dried, and then packed for the nearest market. Much depends on the nicety of this oiling and drying process, as also on the condition of

the pod when picked. The fruit is much improved by cultivation.

From two to four pounds a day can be gathered in good localities by an industrious native. A small capital—say \$3000 in cash—would quite monopolize the vanilla business of all Honduras. The value of good vanilla in the markets of Europe and the United States is too well known for comment here. There are no reliable statistics whereby to ascertain the amount collected in Central America. Near the city of Cojutepeque, in San Salvador, a successful attempt has been made to establish a vanilla hacienda, devoting the entire space of a large estate to the cultivation of the vine. The article is extensively cultivated in Mexico, and the soil of Honduras seems equally adapted to it. Don Francisco listened attentively to my proposal to have a space of land cleared for the experiment, and I have since learned from him that several vines he had transplanted have exceeded his most sanguine hopes.

But it was not alone the glistening lanceolate leaves of the vanilla that absorbed our attention. Various forms of vegetation, the solidest and the tenderest, gave life and animation to the scenery around. The shrubs and trees looked fat with sap, and ready to burst their rinds with the warm expansion. Vegetable ivory and cork; the cocoanut and banana; the wild lemon and the luscious guava; gum of Araby, and in the uplands the barley of the North; delicately-perfumed plants were here, and the ill-scented but useful India-rubber. The names of many Don Chico was entirely ignorant of, even their local ones; but the *vaqueros*, whose lives had been passed from childhood roaming among the woods in search of stray cattle, or coursing days alone among the plains and hills, were familiar with nearly all, and answered readily to every inquiry. Thus I was warned at one time from contact with the deadly *mansanilla*, the Upas of Olancho; and at another my attention was directed to a tree loaded with black, shiny berries, resembling the largest size of swamp whortleberries, but of a sweet, grapy flavor, and known here as the *salsí*. These I gathered by the handful, stripping them from the twigs, and eating them with a keen appreciation of their quality. The foliage of this tree is nearly the same as that of the mountain ash of New England.



On another occasion I rode with the general and L—— to the River Moran, one of the tributaries of the Guayape. Taking its rise toward Tiupacente to the southward, and descending by two splendid falls, it leaps in a whirl of foam to join the larger stream below.



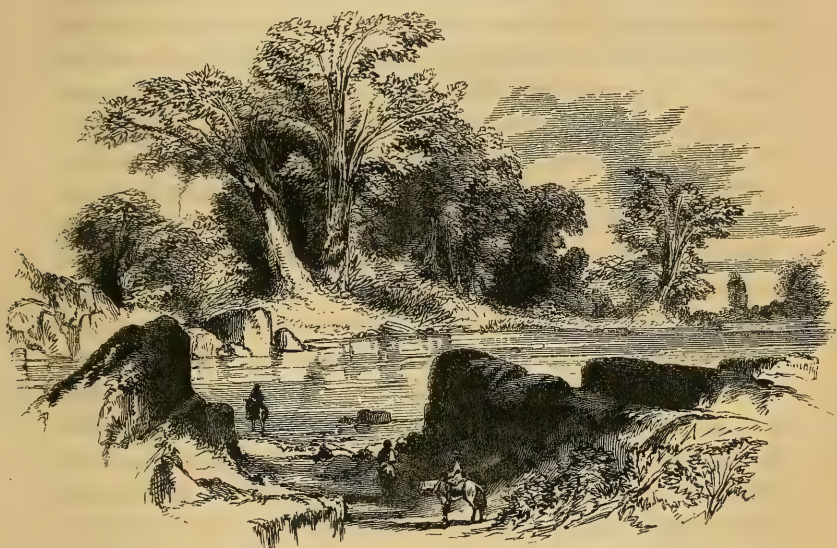
CATTLE HACIENDA.

As usual, we started at early dawn, and, traveling the velvety plains of Lepaguare and Galeras, stopped at the hacienda of that name, for many years the residence of Don Santiago Zelaya. We had hardly entered the gateway when the ground began to tremble as with the beating of many hoofs, and at the same moment, from around a bend in the woods, appeared a troop of horses and mules, numbering per-

haps two hundred. They were at full stretch, and heading directly for the *corral* or cattle-pen, pursued by four or five mounted *vaqueros*, following the herd by instinct, and dodging to the right and left as any one of the chase seemed disposed to bolt and quit company. This was a new picture, and as it passed fairly to view on the open plain, I hardly knew which most to admire, the sleek and elegant forms of the half-wild animals, or the incredible ease and grace with which these picturesque Centaurs sat and guided their leaping steeds. There was nothing strained or awkward either in the trappings or the light costume of the riders. Brought up astride the fierce wild horses of the plains, they move with the animal, and seem a part of the creature, whose very muscles seem to act in obedience to their will.

The whole herd dashed, kicking and plunging, pell-mell into the inclosure, and we remained long enough to witness the operation of breaking a she-devil of a mule, whose glistening hide, straining like velvet over her trembling body, showed every mus-

cle as she sprang madly about in the toils of the *lazo*. Don Santiago and a company of half a dozen shortly after joined us, and we galloped away toward the Rio Moran. The falls were only visited at long intervals by the natives, to hunt up some hermit of a bull or Daniel Boone of a horse, whose tastes led them to this solitary locality to escape the monthly routine of *corraling*. We crossed several small streams until we reached the Guayape, fording it at a rocky passage where the country



GUAYAPE RIVER NEAR GALERAS.

spreads out into a savanna or plain. Here stands a small hut of branches, where the cattle-drivers were accustomed to pass the night when belated. This ford during the rainy months is impassable. Leaving the river, we mounted a range of hills crowned with pines and oaks, and ledges of quartz protruding along its steep sides. The path now became lost in the branches and long grass, whose luxuriance showed how little the trail was traveled. Our guide on this trip was a long, swarthy fellow, whose muscular limbs indicated long travel in the mountains. The general called him Marcos. From the summit of this ridge I again noted the bearings of the principal peaks, among which that of Teupacente loomed conspicuous. The

country through which we passed was mountainous and picturesque, but not wearing the inviting aspect of the valleys below, these ranges forming the natural boundaries of the great cattle-plains of Lower Olancho. The falls of the Moran are about three leagues from the ford of the Guayape. The whole distance from Lepaguare by the winding of the road was about twenty miles. We descended into the next valley, crossing a small tributary of the Guayape, and, rising the succeeding ridge, followed its crest, when, approaching the slope of the mountain from among a pine forest, we were suddenly within sound of the cascade, whose voice came solemnly up and penetrated the woods. We rested a while, and then commenced the descent by a series of grassy *plateaus* to where the upper fall came in view, and, immediately after, the lower one. The spray, dashing wildly upon the tumble of rocks, kept them dripping with moisture, which sparkled in the sunlight even at that distance. We now dismounted, and, fastening our animals, commenced the descent toward the falls. These do not, like heavier cataracts, overpower with impressions of their grandeur, but please rather by their beauty of proportion, grace of motion, color, and adaptation to the surrounding scenery. Concentrating their force after the turbulent gathering above, the waters throw themselves out broadly along the bosom of the slant rock, and gradually settle themselves into the river below, while the surrounding cliffs echo the grave music of their voice.

By help of the depending boughs, I made my way down to a narrow, slippery ledge below the falls, from which position new features in the scenery were unveiled. Branches wrenched from the overhanging trees lay along the water's edge, with drooping but not yet withered leaves, denoting the recent passage of a storm and the consequent flood of the river. Masses of rock, that had been precipitated from the heights above, encroached in bold juts upon the stream. From one of them, an eagle, as if displeased at our presence in a domain of which he alone was lord, rose heavily, and sailed away above the higher summits of the mountain. Some of the interstices of the cliff were stocked with flowers, and acacias, or something closely resembling them, drooped their yellow tresses, languid and beautiful, to their own bright reflection in the stream.



From where we stood, I took in the full depth of the fall, and could trace the river leaping down a series of cascades toward the Guayape. In situations like this, the blue of sky and water, and the green of foliage, are not the presiding tints of the landscape. The gray of the bare rocks, the crimson, yellow, and white of those that are moss-clad, the brown and olive of decayed vegetation, the glitter of the spray, the depths, almost black, of the silent forests—all these, with the clearness of the pervading atmosphere, touching with aerial hue the summits of the purple mountain ridges, combined to produce a picture, to represent which every color and combination of the painter's palette would be called in requisition.

It was late in the afternoon when we scrambled up the rugged ascent, and, remounting our horses, turned again toward home, which we reached late at night.

On several occasions we started away on hunting excursions, but, until our return from the eastward later in the season, we had but ill luck. The deer of Olancho are similar to those of all Central America, of a light brown color, and are shot rather for the skins, which form an important article of export, than as desirable for food.

So abundant are the deer and antelope in some of the mountains of Honduras, that it is usual to travel with a gun slung across the shoulders. In Olancho, where the care of cattle and collection of hides occupies mainly the attention of the people in the capacity of herdsmen, they carry also a butcher-knife thrust into the girdle, which has given rise to the saying throughout the rest of the state that the *Olanchanos* are quarrelsome desperadoes.

While preparing for my departure from Tegucigalpa, I remember to have been frequently warned by my friends there that traveling in Olancho was extremely dangerous; but from my first arrival to the time of my departure I met only with profuse hospitality, and found the natives simple and kind-hearted.

The hacienda of Lepaguare is nearly a thousand feet higher than Jutecalpa, which gives it an elevation of about eighteen hundred feet above the sea. The mining localities will probably average about that height above the ocean. My observa-



tions of temperature and weather were made uninterruptedly three times a day, from September to February. At six o'clock A.M., observations made from December 16th to January 15th showed an extreme variation of only nine degrees,  $52^{\circ}$  to  $61^{\circ}$ . Noon observations for the same days showed the same variations, from  $72^{\circ}$  to  $80^{\circ}$ . Evening observations from six P.M. gave only six degrees of variation,  $69^{\circ}$  to  $75^{\circ}$ . The morning temperature at Lepaguare was about  $59^{\circ}$ , and at noon about  $78^{\circ}$ ; the evening was about  $74^{\circ}$  for the winter. It is seldom as hot at Jutecalpa as it has been known at New York in the summer season. The reasons for this are geographical, and do not apply generally to the tropics. At Truxillo, on the sea-coast, the heat is greater, and bilious fevers and dysenteries are common, though not often fatal. My travels in Olancho did not carry me to the coast, but from the testimony of numerous persons it must be generally unhealthy. The lower country bordering on the Caribbean Sea is known as the *tierra caliente* among the *Olanchanos*, and few of them who visit it escape a touch of the fever. Señor Ocampo, with whom I became intimate, had twice, he said, been brought "near the tomb" in pursuing the hazardous calling of the mahogany-cutter, which required him to remain on the low coast savannas and lagoons. With the exception of occasional reference to the scenery and climate as I passed through the country, I have reserved these subjects for a fuller description in a distinct chapter. The interior of Olancho, and, indeed, of the greater part of Honduras, offers one of the healthiest and most agreeable climates in the world. Many natives have lived to advanced age without ever passing into the low countries, and could probably never be persuaded to do so.

After several weeks spent at Lepaguare and the neighboring estates, where I enjoyed an unceasing round of festive reception, and all the warmth of the rude hospitality of the people, I intimated to the general my desire to proceed eastward toward the famous town of Jutecalpa, of which I had heard frequent mention as the metropolis of the little world of Olancho, and of surpassing interest to the stranger, as retaining, in the architecture of its buildings and the simple customs of its inhabitants, the primitive appearance of the early Spanish settlements.

Although my case was well stocked with odd-looking letters of introduction to the principal families of the place, Don Francisco insisted upon adding nearly a dozen to the package, which he said would set them by the ears for the right of entertaining me. He advised me by all means to remain at the houses of Señores Garay or Gardela, old and wealthy citizens, who would have horses always in readiness for me, and be able to afford more valuable information than any other persons in the town. The *Funcion de la Virgen* was to commence the 8th of December, and as this is the principal *dia de fiesta* of Olancho, my host was very anxious that I should be in town during the week which it occupied. The sickness of the señora forbade her leaving the house, and the girls, of course, would remain to nurse her. The general promised to meet me at Jutecalpa, and there arrange with me the oft-mentioned contract, the terms of which I had been cogitating over since my arrival. The object of my host in this delay was to confer with the four remaining brothers, without whose concurrence he would refuse to enter into any agreement.

At noon we started from Lepaguare, amid the "*Adios, Don Guillermo!*" of the *vaqueros* and the crowd belonging to the hacienda. Conspicuous among them, and a head taller than the rest, stood the general, with his great beaming face expressing all the warmth of his generous heart. He is the idol of the people, and they may well love him. Our road to Jutecalpa lay over the usual level plain. We had just turned a distant angle in the road, shutting out the hacienda from sight, when the tramp of horses was heard coming after us, and the general, Don Toribio (who had arrived from Truxillo), and Julio galloped toward us. They were determined to extend the compliment of accompanying us on our road. This is considered one of the greatest civilities that can be shown to a stranger in Olancho. It is a custom descended from the conquerors.

A brisk gallop brought us to the hacienda of Galeras, where the general desired we should remain that night, and take an early start on the following morning. One of the first things that met my eye on dismounting was a basket of veritable Irish potatoes, brought from the mountains of Tegucigalpa, where Don Santiago had sent for them for seed. They were small,

white, watery-looking affairs, but the pride of their owner, who was quite sanguine that they would grow on his estate. I was at once earnestly engaged describing to him the North American method of cultivating them. Passing the hacienda some two months later, I found they had thrown bunches of vigorous leaves above ground, and bid fair to be entirely successful. Señor Zelaya assured me that potatoes had been raised in Olancho, but these were the only ones I saw in that department.

The dinner set before us was a wonder of luxury. It was placed on the great cedar table by two rosy-cheeked, bouncing girls, daughters of Don Santiago, and consisted of wild honey, *tortillas*, fried, jerked, and fresh beef, fresh bread, vegetables, butter, cheese, coffee, cream, rice, fried bananas, roast kid, boiled goat's milk, and eggs boiled and fried. With such a bill of fare, and our late gallop to whet the appetite, we needed no persuasion to prove ourselves good trencher-men. This was Don Santiago's birth-day, which accounted for the unusual good cheer. The old gentleman was soon satisfied, and, leaning back in his chair, he tied an ample blue handkerchief about his head, lighted a *cigarro*, and watched us complacently as we did justice to his dinner.

The house is one of the largest and best in Olancho. It is paved regularly with handsome tiles, and is divided by heavy partitions of masonry into four large apartments, communicating with each other by doors of cedar. The size of the cedars of Olancho I have never seen equaled out of California and Oregon. They are usually found along the river-bottoms, often reaching a hundred feet in height, and from six to ten in diameter. They are found growing in the midst of the forest, and eclipsing all save the mahogany in majestic beauty of proportion and evenness of grain. At several of the haciendas I saw table-tops eleven feet long by seven wide, without a flaw or crack. The wood works easily, and may be applied to all common purposes. The table at Don Santiago's hacienda was the largest I had yet seen. At night, four or five of the natives would spread their *serapes* across its breadth, and make it a comfortable resting-place.

After dinner the old Don took us out to his sheep corral, where we counted some fifty fine-looking *carneros*, from which

the homespun cloth at the hacienda is made. He complained of the ravages of coyotes and wolves, whose voices, in wild chorus, we often heard during the night far over the plain, answered back by the nearer and unanimous concert of the hacienda dogs. Sheep thrive wonderfully in Olancho, where the extensive pasturage presents excellent facilities for raising them. None of the diseases usually incident to these animals are known here; the owners of estates declare the wolves to be the only pests they have to contend with. Some small quantities of wool go to the fair and to the ports of the Caribbean Sea. We were shown a tree of superb foliage near the house, famous for its cathartic properties, called the *aria*; also the *piñon*, with similar qualities; and trailing along the bars of the sheep *corral* was a vine known as the *friaga plata*, the roots of which are a valuable medicine. All of these are in general use in Olancho.

Standing at the door of the hacienda, I was speedily lost in contemplating the wondrous intensity with which Nature works, producing in close proximity so many forms of vegetation. Every useful shrub and tree that grows seems to have made this garden of Central America its home. There is scarcely a work for human hands which may not be executed here with materials found upon the surface; not a month in the year when labor may not be performed; not a taint in the atmosphere, nor any indigenous or imported pestilence. Don Santiago spoke of great and wealthy haciendas of cattle and mules to the northward and eastward, where valleys equally picturesque and delightful could be found, perhaps even more secluded from the world than those about us. "You must travel," said he, "many months through these mountains before you will know Olancho;" and as I gazed at the distant ranges to the north and east, their faint outlines almost melting in the blue sky beyond, I could easily imagine the secluded valleys, and rich, verdure-clad meadows sleeping peacefully at their feet. Between us and the nearest range, forming a natural amphitheatre, the green and tinted plains lay undulating like a painted sea, over which thousands of cattle fed lazily along, and the few trees cast lengthening and flickering shadows as their leaves glowed in the sunset and trembled in the upland breeze.

We awoke early next morning amid the crowing of cocks



and lowing of herds. Our host described our road, and assured us that, with a moderate but steady pace, we could reach Jute-calpa by nightfall. While breakfast was preparing, we strolled out to enjoy the fresh morning air. One of the boys pointed at a brook near the house where a woman had dug eight ounces of gold in one day. Don Santiago corroborated the statement, and said he had bought it at \$12.50 per ounce.

"All the country about here, far as you can see," he said, "is gold-bearing. Do you see that gorge in yonder chain of hills? That is where the two daughters of Maria Saenz found their famous 'windfall,' four pounds of gold in two days! Along the foot of that range of hills, with the two tall palms to the right, you may dig, and never wash a pan of earth without finding some specks of gold even on the surface. Far beyond, in that chain—you can just see the blue tops over these hills—there are evidences of ancient workings, and even now the women who go there are tolerably successful. Under your feet, where you stand, you can get gold by simple washing. Pull up a stalk of corn from yonder plantation, shake the roots carefully into a bowl, and nine times out of ten you will see some yellow dust; and look at the *adobe* of which the walls of that stone house are constructed: you may pulverize any of those square cakes of mud, and you can scarcely fail to find, after washing, a few specks of gold at the bottom. Gold!" continued my friend, pulling nervously at the *cigarro* he held firmly in his thumb and finger, "gold! there is as much of it here, Don Guillermo, as in California. We only need the energy to get it out—the enterprise and *work* of the great American people. The very walls of our houses are impregnated with gold!"

I left my kind-hearted old friend, and strayed down to a deep place in the *Quebrada* to bathe. Here I observed a number of *sensontes*, or mocking-birds, splashing about with the same object, and fluttering distractedly here and there, now plunging headlong into the placid element, or desisting a while to have a jolly fight on some adjacent tree, from which they would again descend, apparently with increased zest, to the bath. Some of them, perched among the foliage, whiled away the tedious process of feather-drying by practicing their morning concert, the rich strains of which some hook-beaked, gawky *juaca-*

*malla* would interrupt with his harsh voice, and then, as if dissatisfied with his ineffectual competition, compose his gorgeous plumage and sail away, until his gay colors faded in the deep blue of the sky.

In my anxiety to reach Jutecalpa, I resolutely refused the tempting invitations to remain at Galeras, and while it was yet morning, made out of the *patio* in company with the three elder brothers and several younger members of the Zelaya family. They wished to accompany me a few miles on the road. As we passed rapidly along in the face of a fresh morning breeze, the three old men separated themselves a while, and conversed earnestly together. An occasional glance showed me they were entertaining my proposals for a contract, and were perhaps discussing my own claims to their business relations. After a while, wheeling their horses, which up to now had been held to a hand-gallop, they came nearer, and Don Jose Manuel, the eldest, said,

“Don Guillermo, we have observed that something troubles you; perhaps it is the fear that we shall not feel disposed to enter into a contract with you. You have come from a long distance, and are, no doubt, associated with wealthy and great men at the North. They expect you to succeed, and you shall. Go to Jutecalpa, and pass the *funcion* in feasting and dancing, and when you have seen the country, come to us, and the general shall make a contract with you to bring the good and industrious of your countrymen to Olancho to open our gold mines. We are all agreed that this is the only way to show the world what Olancho is, and could we be young again, we would ourselves go there, learn your great improvements, and do for Olancho what I believe the Americans will eventually accomplish.”

In this strain the simple-hearted brothers encouraged me. After a few miles they reined in, and, wishing me *buen viaje*, wheeled round and stretched away over the plain. I stood and watched their forms until the intervening woods shut them out from view. Then, with a feeling almost of home-sickness, I turned toward the eastward, and with L—— and my two servants again headed for Jutecalpa.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Gold Washings on the Rio de Jutecalpa.—The Road.—*Lignum Vitæ*-trees.—Monte de Aguacate.—Dry Gulches.—Mamaisaca.—More *Lavaderas*.—Buying Gold Dust.—Monte Eucaitado.—The Campanilla.—Scenery on the Road.—Feathered Horticulturists.—Jutecalpa.—View from the Mountain.—First Impressions.—The Church.—Introductions.—Don Francisco Garay.—One of the *Hidalgos* of Olancho.—The Padres Cubas and Buenaventura.—Liberal Offers.—Map-making.—The Climate.—Jutecalpa in the Olden Time.—Don Opolonio Ocampo.—An Adventure with the Warees.—More Gold-washing.—The Liquid Amber-tree.—Preparations for the Funcion.—Applicants for Pocket-money.—An Olancho Patriarch.—The “Plaza de Toros.”

SHORTLY after parting with the Zelayas we came to a piece of sloping land, near the Rio de Jutecalpa, where the ground seemed to have been skimmed over for several rods, leaving the bed-rock bare at a depth of perhaps fourteen inches, with an appearance like that remaining after the California operation of “ground-sluicing.” I afterward learned that a valuable deposit of gold, indicated by an abundance of a red, ferruginous rock resembling cinnabar, and which in Olancho is considered a certain proof of the existence of gold, had been found here. The women had carried this earth (answering to the California dry-diggings) in their *bateas* to the river, where in a week they washed out several pounds of fine gold. Either the deposit had given out at the limits above-mentioned, or the gold had become so fine and scarce as not to warrant the snail-paced operation of lugging the earth to the river in small quantities. I felt almost certain that, with a set of hose and a full hydraulic apparatus, such as that used in Nevada county, the entire hill could be made to pay large wages. The labor of these women had been performed with pointed sticks, and not a crowbar, pick, or shovel had ever been used in the vicinity.

From Lepaguare to Jutecalpa the distance is some thirty miles. Under the impression that this must hereafter be traveled by *caretas* or wagons loaded with machinery, I was careful to note the facilities of the route; and, though the descent from the valley of Lepaguare to the town is not much less than a

thousand feet, there is scarcely a place where a loaded wagon could not now pass, and, with a slight improvement of some crossings of the Rio de Jutecalpa, the road would answer every purpose. As it is, one may ride at a hand-gallop between the two places, the path leading for the most part over level savannas prettily wooded with copses, and resembling the more level portions of New England. In some places the way was bordered with dense thickets, where flowers and rare plants clustered in close proximity, and afforded shelter to a variety of birds and animals.

Among the trees I saw the *lignum vitæ* (or *guaiacum*), here known as the *guayacan*. This valuable wood is rarely felled except by the mahogany-cutters, owing to its extreme hardness. I believe it is identical with a wood I often heard mentioned as the "*quebracha*" (*quebra-hacha*, or break-axe), and growing wild in all the low forests of Eastern Honduras, along with the rosewood and mahogany. The tree usually attains a height of forty feet. The foliage is peculiar, resembling that of the cypress, and bearing a profusion of small, whitish flowers. Among the Poyas Indians the bark and gum are used as medicines. The *guayacan* generally makes a portion of the mahogany raft floating down the Guayape or Patook.

By noon we had reached a conical mountain, standing to the northeastward of our route, known as *El Pico de Aguacate*, at the foot of which the *Quebrada*, or creek of that name, flows brawling along, and precipitates itself into the Rio de Jutecalpa below. Here again we obtained traces of gold washing. The mercury in my circular thermometer, as we rode in the sun, stood at 80°. White, fleecy clouds passed briskly overhead, impelled by the fresh breeze that rustled among the foliage, and at no time during our ride did we experience discomfort from heat. While L—— made a sketch of the Peak of Aguacate, the boys unloaded the pack-mule and spread out our eating paraphernalia on the grass. Small, delicate flowers, such as those seen in the temperate zones, nodded gayly in the wind about us, and adorned the sides of the adjacent hill-slopes.

There are numerous dry gulches skirted with pines throughout this part of the country, resembling in every respect those of California. My servants, who had lived always among the



soberer scenery of the department of Tegucigalpa, and never before realized scenes so beautiful as these, vented their admiration in simple ejaculations, and begged me to remember and employ them again on my return with the great company from *el Norte*.

After leaving Aguacate we met several persons on the road, mostly mounted, who, rejoiced at such an opportunity of learning the latest news from the outer world, turned back and rode with us some distance. I took care to impress them with the importance of *los Americanos del Norte*, and the inestimable benefits they would confer upon Olancho as agriculturists and miners. We crossed the Rio de Jutecalpa eight times on our journey to the town. In several localities we found the marks of recent gold-washing. At this time, and, indeed, for several weeks before the *Funcion de la Virgen*, the women, with religious zeal, address themselves steadily to working along the river beds to meet the expenses of the ceremonies, of decorating the church, and of adorning themselves in the simple finery of the *tiendas*. Among the small streams flowing into the river was that of Tilapa, also noted for some "rich strikes" made by the women some years previous. From this place the distance to the hacienda and hamlet of Mamaisaca is two leagues, another by the windings of the road to the hacienda of Nance, and thence two more to Jutecalpa.

At Mamaisaca we overtook two girls cautiously wading across the Rio de Jutecalpa. L—— accosted them good-naturedly, and inquired the distance to town. "*Aquí no mas*" (just here), they replied. "Do you see how crumpled their dresses are?" said L——: "that is a sign that they have been washing gold; they have had their skirts tied tightly around them while standing in the water." I endeavored to get them into conversation, but they only looked stupidly at each other and smiled; they seemed afraid to reply, or even to look at us. After repeated trials, however, we conquered their diffidence, and found out that L—— was right in his conjecture as to their recent occupation. I offered to buy their gold if they would call on me at Jutecalpa, upon which they readily exhibited what they had collected. They had left their sticks and *bateas* at the *Quebrada* below, where they intended to return the following day. The oldest

took out of her bosom a cloth which she carefully unrolled, discovering a quill nearly filled with fine scaly particles of that deep yellow hue which distinguishes the gold of the Guayape and its tributaries from that of other portions of Olancho and Segovia, where its white appearance indicated a partial amalgamation with other metals or substances. The quill was still wet, and the finer dust adhered to the inside, which prevented my turning the whole of it out; but on afterward weighing it at Jutecalpa there was about a quarter of an ounce, which I bought for a trifle over two dollars in silver.

Here we took leave of our *lavaderas*, and, rising the bank from the river, came in full view of a beautiful peak, known as *el Monte Encantado*, or the Enchanted Mountain, from the tradition that its summit is the haunt of the spirits of the aborigines, whence issue pale fires and the sounds of solemn bells. The natives pass the vicinity of the *Encantado* with deep awe, and beads are told with double unction when approaching its mysterious precincts.

The harmless little meteor of the forest, the lantern-fly, probably supplies the spectral lights, and the *campanero* or *campanilla* (bell-ringers) the solemn tolling. The bird producing this sound is found throughout Honduras. The traveler plodding through the woods is startled with the distant tone of a bell floating on the waves of the air, with the undulations peculiar to a heavy belfry tenant. He pauses to listen, and, after a short interval, again hears the sound piercing the solitudes, and resembling the muffled clang of some deep-mouthed convent bell. The *campanero* tolls about an hour toward evening; he is an unassuming fellow, with few of the gaudy trappings of his feathered companions, and affects the shadiest depths of the forest. He is rarely seen, and is said to erect a remarkable crest from his head as he plays ventriloquist free of charge.

The whole route toward Jutecalpa abounds in pretty views, and, Jew-like, I felt a grasping desire to preserve them all. Sometimes the path led us through a natural arbor, like those seen at Hartford and New Haven; or into a Gothic jungle, gaudy as an Italian dress-circle, draped with *laines* and tasseled with blossoms; sometimes we entered a miniature valley, in which the rude cabin of the little hacienda peeped out from

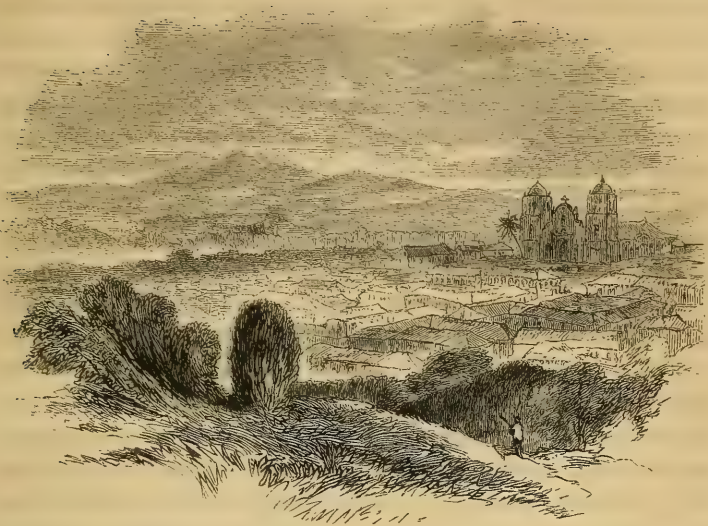
among a mass of fruit-trees—beans, rice, pumpkins, and oranges grouped together, and among them the bronzed *niñas* (whose simple attire consisted of a string of beads and a shock of frowzy hair) stared half frightened at us from the foliage of which (so motionless were they) they seemed to form a part; or, passing a section of more open country, we found ourselves thridding little copses of the *jicoral*, the Ganymede of Olancho, whose ruddy limbs present to the traveler the indispensable calabash, or drinking-cup of the woods.

The birds of Olancho are the most persevering horticulturists in the country. As if by design of Providence, they carry the seeds of a variety of fruits in their beaks, or drop them undigested about the hills and valleys, where, in the fat soil, nourished by copious rains and sunshine, they speedily germinate. Many fruits are thus distributed about the country. I thus accounted for the frequent lemon, orange, and sweet lime trees appearing along the road. The delicious *salsi*, already described, has been spread over Olancho in this way, and the vanilla is no doubt disseminated in a similar manner.

But I was too anxious to view the goal of my hopes, Jutecalpa, to give much attention to these subjects. The botanist has here an extensive field, and many valuable drugs, plants, and superb flowers will yet be brought to light, as the country is opened up to scientific research.

On leaving Lepaguare, the general had insisted on our leaving our shaggy mountain mules to recuperate at the hacienda, supplying their places with fine, vigorous horses, for our servants as well as for ourselves. My own (which the generous old man afterward gave me) was a *tordilla*, or spotted animal, spirited and well-knit. They bore us with unwearied pace up the slopes of the hills, until the frequent trains of mules and natives, plodding toward the eastward, showed us we were near our journey's end. We spurred up the gentle ascent to the ridge overlooking the valley of Jutecalpa, and, resting at the summit, gazed down, through the dim light of the evening, upon the capital of Olancho.

It would be difficult to describe the pleasure with which I contemplated in silence the splendid landscape glimmering in the last ray of sunset, and the odd-looking, superannuated Spanish



JUTECALPA FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

town spread out beneath us. Long had this place been pictured to my imagination, and now, after months of expectation, I found myself within sound of its church bells and local bustle. Far removed from the ordinary routes of travel or commerce, almost a myth even in secluded Central America, enjoying an ancient reputation as the centre of the gold region, which, two centuries ago, before civilization had well commenced to subdue the wilderness of New England, attracted the followers of Alvarado and the mailed cavaliers of the Conquest, Jutecalpa is invested with an interest to the modern adventurer only equaled by that attached to the mysterious ruins of aboriginal Chichen, Uxmal, or Palenque.

A vast plain, lost in the horizon, yet bounded, as we could with difficulty discern, by ranges of rounded, wood-crowned mountains, spread away to the east and north, on which the purple clouds of the west shed a ruddy glow, faintly tinting the hills, and indicating by a streak of light the winding course of the Rio de Jutecalpa, which, passing north of the town, enters the Guayape some miles below. The distant tapping of a drum denoted the prevalence of the immemorial custom of patrolling the Plaza at nightfall, and the pealing of the *campana de ora-*



*cion* reminded us that here too was observed the beautiful rite I have frequently alluded to in previous pages. L—— aroused me from my reverie, and, rapidly descending, we entered the paved streets of the town. The place is not unlike Tegucigalpa in point of architecture, but about one third the size, having the usual church, Plaza, *cabilda*, and principal private dwellings, and the streets running nearly at right angles. Some of the houses are handsome two-story edifices, neatly whitewashed, tiled, and with extensive fruit-gardens in the rear. The church, a recent one, occupies the site of the old building, and was constructed partly from the pious contributions of the *lavaderas*.

We stopped at a small *tienda* forming the corner of two streets, and inquired for the house of Señor Gardela. His residence, counted the finest in the town, forms part of the southern side of the square. The Señor Gardela was absent at one of his haciendas, and the house, though shut up, remained, as one of the servants informed us, at the disposal of the strangers. We preferred, however, to proceed to the residence of the venerable Don Francisco Garay, of whom we had heard as a wealthy citizen living in solitary state on the outskirts of the town, and who was a warm *compadre* of the general Zelaya.

After some delay a little knot of people had collected, who kindly offered to conduct us. We crossed the square, following the direction indicated by our guides, and stopped before a large white building with grated windows, and apparently shut up on all sides. We knocked repeatedly at the door, and receiving no answer, Victor, by my direction, thundered away at the great gateway to the right, communicating with the back *patio*. Presently the heavy wooden shutter of the window was opened, and a figure clad in white, as we could see through the darkness, looked out and shouted "*¿Quién?*"

L—— replied that we bore letters of introduction to Señor Garay, and were desirous of passing the night at the house. The message was delivered, and immediately a gruff voice, evidently of a man far advanced in years, issued from the window, asking our names.

Learning who we were, he apologized for the delay, and bade us enter "in the name of God." At the same time the gateway was thrown open, and we rode into the yard.

We came into a large *patio*, and leaving Victor and Roberto to take care of the beasts, followed an Indian boy into the *sala*, where we presented ourselves to a venerable white-haired personage, who rose with difficulty to receive us from an immense hammock stretching entirely across the apartment. He was of Herculean frame, and must have been, half a century ago, a fine-looking man. He received our letters with dignity, glancing over them through his spectacles, and repeating his cordial welcome, at the same time roaring with the voice of a Stentor for supper "*muy pronto*" for the visitors. The house was quickly astir, and in half an hour we were seated at an ample table, spread with more dainties than I had the time or inclination to take note of.

This was the famous Don Francisco Garay, the Croesus of Olancho, owner of ten thousand head of cattle and six estates, among them the beautiful and extensive *La Heradura*. Our host, after regaining his hammock, lighted a *cigarro*, and was speedily informed as to the object of my visit and the affairs of the world generally. Here was a simple-hearted, hospitable old man, white-haired, and of courteous aspect, who had never been beyond the confines of Olancho in his life of some eighty years. His cattle alone, if estimated at the standard set after the gold discoveries in California by the owner of estates in that country, would count up to a princely fortune, to say nothing of the untold herds of mules and horses, and the leagues of finest land, located in one of the most healthy and picturesque countries in the world!

He had brought up a family of fourteen children, and his wife dying, and with little other occupation or amusement, he had devoted his life to improving his property, frequently dispatching a train of a hundred mules to Truxillo, loaded with cheese, deer-skins, and hides, or sending great droves of cattle, horses, and mules to Guatemala or the fair of San Miguel. About twenty years ago he was thrown from his saddle by a vicious wild horse, and his leg broken by the fall. It was set by some botching itinerant, rendering him a cripple thenceforth. With the exception of short rides upon some gentle mule, selected carefully and broken for his special use, he had resigned his active labors and the supervision of his *hacienda* to his children.

His time is now spent swinging in his beloved hammock, where he smokes the livelong day.

Among his children was a daughter, for some years married to Señor Zelaya, *Alcalde Primero* of Tegucigalpa. The old man told us, as a matter of great interest, that he had sent for her to pass the *funcion* in Olancho. The sons, absent in distant sections of the department, were also expected to be present during the approaching *fiesta*, and a general reunion of the family was to take place. "You could not have arrived more opportunely," continued our host, after imparting, between the whiffs of his *cigarro*, the above details; "the town will now resemble its old festive and holiday times, when the gold placers were producing such vast wealth under the Spaniards."

It was nearly midnight when we had exchanged protestations of friendship with the old *Olanchano*, and learned from his own garrulous lips the details of his life, family, and possessions. We, in turn, retailed the leading political and social events of the past year, of which, in his seclusion, he had heard but indistinct or exaggerated accounts. He listened attentively to our comments on the European war, destined, in his opinion, to entail even greater bloodshed and national changes than those of Napoleon. We then had our hammocks swung, and, wearied with our thirty miles ride, were quickly in the land of dreams.

The arrival of an *Americano del Norte* created an unusual sensation in the little social community of Jutecalpa. The *sala* of Señor Garay was thronged on the following day. Among my visitors were the Curate Padre Francisco Cubas, Padre Buenaventura Colindres, Señor Felipe Bustillos, Mateos Polvon, and numerous other worthies of the town. The ceremony of introduction to these was a bit of ludicrous formality, which any where else would have kept me well employed in commanding my risibles, but several months of experience had made these matters second nature. The Padre Colindres, or Buenaventura, as he was familiarly called, soon became interested in my projects. He was an extremely popular man among all classes, with a great brain stuffed with country knowledge, but no reading beyond the Missal, Prayer-book, and an occasional newspaper from Tegucigalpa. He examined with great curiosity the maps which I had taken with me of the United States, and

especially of California. He copied off the names of the states, and was for some time engaged in studying out a brief translation I made for him of the forms of local government in the States, and other general matters in relation to "*el Norte*." The *Padre Cura*, or Curate of Jutecalpa, Francisco Cubas, ranks above Padre Buenaventura. Each has his section of the department allotted to him, where they make a semiannual visit for the spiritual welfare of the people. I returned the visits of both, and was fortunate to conciliate their good-will. As I have before remarked, the countenance and favor of the priesthood is a powerful auxiliary to the successful issue of any enterprise among Spanish Americans.

While at the house of the *cura* at the time of the succeeding *funcion*, I had an opportunity of observing the power possessed by the clergy over the people, and their readiness to contribute to its support. Several stout young fellows entered successively during our interview, and, making a low obeisance at the door, came forward and deposited with their spiritual adviser various sums, from one to four dollars, to propitiate the Virgin in their favor. These the padre told me were part of their earnings at *monte*, the favorite game of the Spaniard the world over. These were followed by whole processions of women and old men, each willing to atone for some *peccadillo* by a trifle to the Virgin. The padre, who is not over thirty, I thought the most intelligent man I had seen in Olancho. He was self-educated in Latin and French, and his library, of some two hundred theological, metaphysical, and historical works, showed him to be no superficial reader.

At the house of Señor Garay I had scarcely remained an hour before I had made half a dozen appointments with as many persons for excursions to various parts of the department; among others, a journey to the famous Indian trading town of Catacamas, a few days' journey toward the coast, near where the Guayambre flows into the Guayape, and known as "*La Confluencia de los Rios*." Every body seemed imbued with a desire to bring to my notice some notable spot once celebrated as gold *placers*, and which, if their grave statements were to be taken, might, with a proper amount of knowledge and enterprise, be brought to produce millions.



As usual, I spread out my map of Olancho, which became an object of general interest, both on this occasion and throughout Jutecalpa. Many came to see it, and each had some hacienda to insert, or some range of hills or river to suggest. The most ignorant understood the nature of the work, but I found their estimates of distances very unreliable in cases where an American backwoodsman would be clear and accurate. To obtain the direction to any locality, I would ask half a dozen successively to point out what they would consider the exact course, and in this particular I invariably found them to agree. Few knew any thing about the points of the compass, or the position of the north star; but their ideas of direction were almost infallible, and as reliable among themselves as the ancient system of navigation by the stars. On ascertaining the exact bearings of a place by my compass I located it on the map, and then pursued a separate series of questions as to what streams, mountains, and valleys must be crossed to reach it. The statement that a compass is valueless in the mountains of Honduras, owing to the mineral deposits, is simply absurd, and not entitled to a moment's consideration.

I have already devoted undue space to descriptions of the climate of Olancho. It is because the old-fashioned and commonly-received opinions regarding these "terrible tropics" have kept possession of the public mind, that I have endeavored to show that these elevated table-lands, fanned by the invigorating sea winds, are equally healthy with the delightful regions of Pueblo, Jalapa, and Mexico—places yet fresh in the mind of every American who visited them during the Mexican war.

I do not deem it probable that Americans visiting Olancho, or, indeed, any part of interior Honduras, will degenerate by reason of the air or the indolent habits consequent upon association with the effete races of Spanish America. Over fields teeming with gold, the Yankee can not resist the temptation to labor, and it is my conviction that in Olancho alone, of all tropical America, the problem of colonization by the industrious citizens of the North will be peacefully and effectually solved. The hills covered with foliage, and the plains with deep grass, preserve a moisture in the earth during nine months of the year (June to February inclusive), and the trade-winds blowing at all seasons

temper the air to a delightful mean. At Jutecalpa, Lepaguare, Concepcion, Catacamas, or Las Flores, all of them healthy locations, but particularly the two first named, thriving trading-stations can be established, which, under the guidance of enterprising Americans, and protected by a wise and stable government, may be increased to flourishing towns, supported by an unfailing supply of gold, endless cattle, horses, and mules, a peaceable population, and one of the most prolific agricultural regions in the world.

The town of Jutecalpa, though built on the site of an ancient Indian village of that name, is not of such antiquity as the old capital of this section of Central America, Olancho, now known as *Olancho Viejo* or *Antigua*, and of which the ruins only exist to denote its former importance. These are situated at the foot of the *Monte Boqueron*, on the Rio de Olancho, toward Catacamas, and their description I have reserved until my narrative brings me to that locality. Jutecalpa, previous to the destruc-



CALLE DE CONCEPCION, JUTECALPA.

tion of Olancho, was an unimportant village. Although the commercial centre of Eastern Honduras, a region comprising more territory than the whole of San Salvador and Costa Rica, the town, until lately, has not found a place on any map of Central America. Its very existence seems to have been ignored, like that of the other towns of Olancho. It has rarely been visited even by the few adventurous mahogany-cutters penetrating to the interior during the last century from the settlements at Ba-

lize and along the eastern coast. It is now the head-quarters of traffic for the department. The town is said to have formerly contained upward of eight thousand inhabitants, but the decline of trade, the decay of mining enterprises under the shifting republican governments, and latterly the ravages of the *langostas*, or locusts (sweeping away whole crops in a single night), have combined to decrease the population of Jutecalpa to about four thousand, which, at times of public celebrations, is temporarily trebled.

A system of roads, or rather mule-trails, centring at Jutecalpa, extends over the department. Nearly all the wealthy owners of cattle estates have residences in town.

In collecting data relating to Olancho, I was introduced to a Costa Rican, Señor Opolonio Ocampo, who had been engaged for several years in cutting mahogany on the Guayape, Guayambre, and Jalan. I first met him at the house of Señor Garay, and our acquaintance ripened into an intimacy, which lasted until my departure from Olancho. Liberally educated and intelligent, and his sagacity sharpened by intercourse with the London mahogany dealers at Balize, he was peculiarly qualified to obtain reliable information, which his habits of observation had enabled him to treasure up during his constant travels through the interior and rafting on the Guayape and Patook Rivers. He had at times some hundreds of men employed in his cortes or cuttings on the Guayape and its tributaries. I am particularly indebted to Don Opolonio for minute details respecting the course of the principal rivers below the points where I visited them.

For several days previous to the *funcion*, I rode about the country in company with Señor Ocampo. We usually carried arms, more at my suggestion than any supposition on his part that we should need them. While visiting the village of Jutequili, about eighteen miles northwest of Jutecalpa, we encountered on the road a vicious-looking little wild pig, which I was about to dose with one of my leaden pills, when Don Opolonio advised me to abstain, as where one of these animals was to be found there was often a large drove, whose courage and ferocity were not to be despised. I suffered the little fellow to trot into the bushes, but the road a few hundred yards in advance was

shortly afterward filled with them. The animal is known on the coast as the *Waree* or *Warry*. I could not refrain from dismounting and leveling my rifle, despite the advice of the señor, and with the report the largest I could select described a series of rotary gallops, grunting with savage fury, and at last rolled over and kicked himself out of existence. It was curious to observe the rest of the herd as they viewed his contortions. Don Opolonio walked his horse slowly away, evidently determined to place a respectful distance between himself and the porkers.

As the herd did nothing but grunt and squeal, cantering about, and rooting at the body of their comrade, I paid the same compliment from beside my horse to another. The moment their little red eyes caught sight of me, they started full tilt after the origin of all their trouble. I swung myself into the saddle, and, turning tail upon the advancing legion, it was a question of mettle between Don Opolonio and myself who should get over the greatest space of ground in the shortest given time. They followed us several hundred yards, and finding their powers of locomotion unequal to the task, returned to the dead bodies, and recommenced their rooting. We followed them up and shot four, when the whole herd regarding this as very unequal sport, galloped away into the woods, leaving us in possession of the field.

They are a brave, slender-legged, nimble creature, in shape something like a cross between the common pig and a porcupine, with small, wicked eyes, formidable tusks, and generally of a dirty brown or mud color. They run in the mountains in droves, where they are sometimes encountered by the lonely traveler, who is often obliged to take to the nearest tree for refuge, especially if he has had the temerity to shoot one of their number. At such times he may fire away from his perch with perfect safety, and, though his gun may lay half their number low, they will continue to rush around the tree among the bodies of their slain companions, gnashing their tusks and emitting a low, enraged grunt, until their leader, commonly a large ferocious boar, is killed, when they scamper away with all speed, his loss completely discouraging their porcine ferocity.

In a domesticated state they run from door to door in the



villages, devouring what offal may be thrown out, and disputing with the zopilotes for the office of public scavengers. The barelegged youngsters early learn the virtue of the waree's glistening teeth. The animal is rarely hunted either in Honduras or Costa Rica, where they particularly abound, and have been erroneously taken for the peccary. As an illustration of the variety of local appellations of many animals as well as birds of Honduras, by which the stranger, if unacquainted with the language, is liable to be led to bewildering conclusions, the names of the waree will serve as an instance. Within a circle of a hundred miles he is called waree, chancha del monte, javelin, peccary, sujejina, warry, and puerco bravo. He rejoices also in a Latin name.

There are numerous mines or *placeres* in the vicinity of Jutecalpa. These, however, are not very productive, and are only known as spots where from time to time some specks of the precious metal have been found. Near Monte Rosa, to the southeast, there are places to which the *lavaderas* repair after the freshets, and collect considerable quantities. But the labor of the old Spaniards, as of the women of the present time, seems to have been mainly directed to the sands of the streams, rather than to changing the course of rivers or digging deep in the dry ravines and gulches, where in California the greatest abundance is found.

While riding to Monte Rosa with Padre Buenaventura for the purpose of examining these *placeres*, we found two children—girls—washing gold in the river. The little creatures had brought the earth in rude baskets of palm leaf from a distance of half a mile, and the particles of gold were plainly visible after the operation of washing. We waited until they had finished their work, and, at the bidding of the padre, they returned with us to the spot. It was on the side of a small hill, where the red earth indicated gold. The bed-rock here came near the surface, leaving the earth about a foot deep. This the little laborers scraped away, and, gathering up the clayey substance below, swept the rock quite clean. They had thus cleared away a space a yard square, and from that had obtained about fifteen cents worth of a pure, scaly gold, beautifully yellow in hue, and of a quality only profitably to be worked with quick-

silver. The operation of "ground-sluicing" would here pay good wages.

It was on this trip that I first saw the tree from which liquid amber distills. It is indigenous to various sections of Central America, but particularly to the table-lands of Olancho, where it is found growing in rich luxuriance amid the numberless bright-leaved trees forming the scenery of the department. I was afterward shown numbers of them on the road between Lepaguare and Galeras, and also in the vicinity of Catacamas. Most of these, however, had been tapped, and thus impaired. Their average height is about thirty feet, but General Zelaya states that in the mountains, about twenty miles to the northward of Jutecalpa, they are found from thirty to eighty feet high, and about three feet in diameter at the base. The trunk is smooth, and naked of branches for twenty feet above the ground, when they shoot out and upward, much like those of the northern pine, forming a cone of living emerald.

The leaves have seven points, are deeply furrowed, and hang upon delicate slender stems. The blossom puts forth early in February, and at that time the tree stands peerless amid the surrounding foliage. The blossoms have long, pointed pink spears shooting from the tops of the branches, and shortly burst into rich globular flowers. The upper face of the leaf is glutinous and shiny, in shape not unlike the silver-leaved maple. The wood is hard, and, when worked, displays a fine variegated grain, capable of a high polish, but seldom cut or used for any purpose in this land of precious dye-woods, timber, and medicinal plants.

The owners of cattle estates send their mayor-domos into the woods to collect the gum which is found exuding from the pores of the tree, and often collecting, like that of the peach, in some knot or bruise along its smooth surface. The gum trickles from the incision in transparent tears down the conduits made by the natives, until, from a spout inserted in some convenient place, a pint or more is collected. By climbing to the lower branches a purer quality is said to be obtained.

A rim of plantain leaves, bound tightly around the trunk and left for several days, is found filled with the precious distillation. I afterward went with Julio, the mayor-domo of Lepa-

guare, about two leagues to one of these trees, where he procured from the leafy troughs at least a pint. The trunk of the liquid amber-tree is clammy to the touch, so that numerous living bees, attracted by the sweet, glutinous substance sweating from the pores, are found sticking helplessly to the bark. The gum, when bottled, becomes of the consistency of sirup. In the *caballaria* of Don Francisco Zelaya there were at least two gallons used for no other purpose than to heal the wounds of horses, mules, and cattle. While there, I saw a drove of mares and colts *corraled*, some of them having been bitten by bats or torn by wild beasts. The wounds were first cleansed with a decoction of some healing plant gathered by one of the boys, and afterward smeared with liquid amber. I was assured that it never failed to effect a speedy cure for flesh-wounds in horses, and that in the mountains, when the mahogany-cutters or hunters wounded themselves, they applied at once to this tree for *remedios*. It is sometimes mixed into a stiff gum with other substances, and chewed by the Indians as a preservative of the teeth. I saw no liquid amber except in Olancho, and, inquiring in other parts of Central America, heard that section of the country designated as particularly abounding with it.

From the day of our arrival the population of Jutecalpa had been steadily augmenting. All was gayety and life, preparing for the long-contemplated *funcion*. The authorities met, and licensed the inhabitants to fire guns and bombas; the little garrison at the *cabilda*, arrayed in its best, paraded the streets, and at intervals awoke the echoes with their field-piece, an old, rickety affair of Spanish make, and with a bore about the size of a common ducking-gun. In Central America they estimate cannon by the racket they can make. At the house of Doña Teresa, across the road, a bevy of señoritas had collected. The interior, as an occasional glance from my window assured me, was gay with colored prints, ribbons, and shawls. People were crowding in from all quarters. Arrivals daily occurred from points fifty miles distant. The *Plaza de Toros* was receiving the finishing touch from the workmen, who had been for several days dragging into town, with ox and mule teams, loads of branches and logs to complete the inclosure. Several musicians, intended to officiate during the week's festivities, had called on

Señor Garay for the customary contribution; the great men of the town had been in solemn conclave at our house with the padres, regarding the expense of decorating the church in a manner befitting this important occasion; the bulls (always gratuitously supplied by Señor Garay) were on their way from the haciendas; premonitory rockets and squibs sputtered and exploded around the *cabilda*, and the usually dull, sleepy town of Jutecalpa presented a wonderful scene of bustle and excitement.

During all this fuss, arrayed in his holiday garb, his lame leg supported by cushions, and his hammock arranged in such a way that, by pulling a string suspended from the roof, he could swing himself to and fro, the old gentleman kept open house, and distributed coin and advice to the many who daily applied to him. At one time a sneaking fellow would slip into the room, hat in hand, and, seating himself respectfully on a trunk, remain speechless, with his eyes fixed lackadaisically on the floor. When Señor Garay had completed his business with a previous comer, he would glance kindly toward the new applicant, light a fresh *cigarro*, and say,

“*Ahora, amigo, que tienes?*”

At this the fellow (now sure of success) would raise his eyes, and reply perhaps to the effect that the ceaseless toil to which, in supporting a blind mother or two young sisters, he was bound, together with the ravages of the locusts, had made it impossible for him to appropriate a *medio* for the celebration of the holiday for the glory of God, and, after a long story, would again cast down his eyes and remain silent. Upon this, the old man would strike with his cane upon the floor, summoning an Indian boy, who proceeded to open an antiquated oaken chest, and draw therefrom a box of copper coin. These he would carefully count over, and hand a liberal share to the petitioner, with the remark, “*Vamos! sin duda sois buen muchacho;*” while, as he presented the gift, he would add, with a parental air finely in keeping with his patriarchal mien, “*Acuerdate, Antonio, que un peso in el bolsillo es el mejor amigo en el mundo.*” (Remember, Antonio, that a dollar in your pocket is the best friend in the world.)

The fellow, who, likely as not, is some ragamuffin of a loafer, calls on God to shower blessings on his venerable benefactor,



and hastens to the Plaza, where his copper coin quickly melts away at the monte table.

One of the favorite amusements of Señor Garay, and which he shared with the whole population of Olancho, was bull-fighting, a pastime in which, in his younger days, he had not disdained to take part, but now contented himself with witnessing the sports from a raised staging, erected (as regularly as the *fiesta* re-occurred) expressly for him outside the great inclosure, and commanding a view of the arena. Knowing this weakness, the bull-fighters always laid the rich Don Francisco under heavy contributions. He could never refuse the demands of his pets, whom he regarded as dedicating their lives to the amusement of the public, and keeping up the holy celebration of the *Funcion de la Virgen*.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

The Streets.—A Visit to the Church.—Scene in the Plaza.—Feather Robes.—Population of Jutecalpa.—Merry Spectacle.—The *Bolero* and *Fandango*.—Olancho Poetry.—A Feu de Joie.—Dinner with the Padre.—Arrival of Visitors.—Orange Marmalade.—Tamarind Ambrosia.—First Day of the Funcion.—How the Girls and Gallants ride.—Corraling the Bulls.—A crazy Race.—Church Ceremonies.—Processions.—Bull-fighting.—Riding a horned Steed.—A golden *Chispa*.—Pure Air.—Gold and Silver Bells.—A social Party.—“*Poco a poco*.”—Doña Ysabel.—Buying Gold Dust.—The Valley of Concepcion.—More “Rainbow Scenery.”—Racing with a Priest.—Site for an American Town.

THE streets of Jutecalpa, like those of all Spanish American towns, are narrow, irregularly paved, and, owing to the glare of the eternal whitewashed walls, hot, and generally emitting any thing but fragrant odors. The houses are mostly of but one story, and the interiors often unpaved, leaving the bare earth for a floor. The roofs are all tiled, which, at a short distance, gives an air of regularity to the town, quickly disappearing as you enter. From the eaves of these the people had been for several days suspending branches and leaves of the palm and cedar, while across the principal streets, from roof to roof, were extended cords made of some tough vine of the country, to which were affixed bunches of a resinous wood, to serve for torches in the approaching illumination. The church was quite covered with these festive decorations, and the portals of the edifice

shrouded with pine and cedar branches. The interiors of houses were similarly adorned, and the appearance of the town reminded me somewhat of the church-dressing at Christmas time in the North.

By the invitation of Padre Buenaventura, I went to witness the preparations which were being made by the women of the town, into whose hands the church had been surrendered. The altar was surrounded and covered with tallow candles placed in small wooden holders. These unctuous illuminators were also liberally displayed about the walls in niches, in front of tinsel figures of saints, and before execrable daubs of paintings, with which the church was adorned. The gallery was also stuck around with candles. The building is lined inside with nicely-planed cedar boards, for the working of which carpenters were imported by the way of Truxillo from Jamaica. Altogether it is a very creditable building, and was ten years in process of construction.

As we entered, we found perhaps two dozen women moving silently, with bare feet, over the tiled pavement, and under their hands the place had already assumed an imposing appearance. The padre said there would be a partial illumination on that evening, when some important ceremony would be performed. The women crossed themselves fervently as they passed the altar, now and then kneeling and repeating, with the volubility of parrots, a selection from the Missal, or bending reverentially toward the figure of the Virgin, whose gaudy raiment and great, bead-like eyes made her decidedly the lion—or lioness—of the occasion. She reminded me more of the figures of Mandarins, with the peculiar bobbing heads, than any thing else I could compare her to. Of course, I remained uncovered, and made my best bow to her ladyship.

Toward night the whole town was in an uproar. Rockets and bonfires disputed possession of the air, and around the Plaza one might see to read as the flames darted here and there, and sent their light against the church walls. Every body who passed the sacred edifice raised his hat, and some kneeled when opposite the doors. Booths and gambling-tables were erected, as in the United States on public days. At the first were sold chichi, tiste, chocolate, aguardiente punch, eggs.

sugar-candy, cakes, fire-works, fruit, and pictures of the Virgin ; at the gambling-stalls stood crowds of well-formed, athletic *vaqueros*, mahogany-cutters, sarsaparilla-gatherers, deer-hunters, and muleteers, each attended with his *muchacha*, gayly dressed for the occasion, and joining in the hearty laugh or exclamation of disappointment. Among them moved the more silent but equally vivacious and amiable Indians, from the settlements of *las Indijenas* to the eastward. Some had come even from La Conquista, San Estevan, and Dulcenombre, and there were numerous handsomely-dressed, fine-looking fellows from the Indian head-quarters of Olancho, Catacamas. Among them might be seen specimens of the beautiful art apparently confined to the American Indian races, feather-robe-making. Some of these were made with rare skill, evincing a taste in the disposal and contrasting of colors which might have been in vain attempted by more cultivated artists.

The gaudiest plumed denizens of the tropical forest are laid under contribution for these robes. One of the Indians, a descendant, I believe, of the Xicaque tribe, described by Juarros, promised me a description of the method of making them ; but my new acquaintance, whom, in virtue of his promise, I had supplied with several handfuls of copper coin to "buck at *monte*," remained partially demented under the effect of a too frequent application to the aguardiente bottle, and at the close of the *funcion* disappeared suddenly with his companions. The robe which I bought of the fellow was subsequently lost from my pack-saddle.

It was now that I began to realize the extent of Olancho's population, and its capabilities of defense. Hundreds of horsemen moved about the square, displaying an equestrian grace which, in the cavalry charge, would make them a worthy antagonist for any mounted troops I have seen in Spanish America. The streets of the town were thronged. It is this facility with which the people of the neighboring villages of San Francisco, Jutequile, Mamaisaca, Los Dorillas, San Nicolas, Concepcion, and El Plomo flock into the town, that has given rise to the error respecting the population of Jutecalpa. The towns of Manto, Silca, Culmi, Yocon, Talgua, Danli, Gualaca, and others, also send large deputations to Jutecalpa during times of

public amusement; these, with the Indians from the Lower Gayape, swell the population to near three times its usual number. The natives of distant parts of Honduras have confounded its inhabitants with those of the adjacent villages. We estimated above twelve thousand souls in Jutecalpa during the *funcion*.

The streets offered one of the gayest spectacles imaginable, heightened greatly by the taste of the women at such times for bright colors, in which I found they differed from those of Nicaragua. Ribbons and flashy shawls flouted the breeze in every direction. Merry voices blended with the tinkling of guitars, the crowd swaying to and fro among horses, and mules, and processions, now laughing with careless mirth, or mingling the noisy talk with the nasal voice of the vocalist, and forming in little circles to witness the *fandango* or *bolero*, in which fine figures and spirited attitudes atoned for the lack of the graces of cultivation.

By ten o'clock the fun grew "fast and furious." The festivities are a mixture of sport and religion, in which the participants are constantly reminded of the supremacy of the Church by the din of bells calling to holy exercise, the passing of processions, and the chanting of priests. It was a wise thought, that of the old padres, who, in establishing the Catholic faith in these countries, made every holiday to tally with some religious phase, so that even in the merriest moments the rites of Catholicism should be present and uppermost.

During the day a written circular was left at Señor Garay's door, of which the following is a copy, authorizing the people to "let themselves loose" generally, and fire muskets, pistols, or rockets at their pleasure.

"*Al Sr. Don Francisco Garay.*

"Decima,  
Deseando que haya alegria,  
Al principiar la funcion,  
Hoy el gremio de la Union,  
Viene á pedirle a porfia.  
Que al punto de medio dia  
En vuestra casa estareis  
Y que de alli tirareis  
La bomba, fusil, ó caete.  
Que pago tendrá el juguete



De Maria no dudeis  
Pues, el Gremio de la Union—  
Lo festeja con porfia.”

In obedience to this mandate, we had maintained a continuous volley from pistols, rifle, and muskets until dark. Don Francisco, whose pride in his visitors increased proportionally to the row they created around his door, kept two Indian boys tearing up paper for wads, and in other ways attending to our wants. We were yet banging away when my good friend Padre Buenaventura came up, and, taking my arm, desired me to accompany him in a tramp about town “*para ver á los liones.*”

This evening is called the Vespers of the Virgin. We strolled among the crowd, exchanging salutations, and my own importance increased considerably by intimacy with the padre. He was every where received with demonstrations of respect and affection. But the padre led me away toward the western part of the town, where we entered a snug little house, and showed me two of his children! “Ah! Padre Buenaventura,” said I, “I thought the Catholic clergy never married.”

“Well, *hijo*, we do not,” he replied, carelessly, and, changing the conversation, introduced me to an olive-hued girl, whose likeness to the children showed her to be the mother. “Now,” said the padre, “I shall show you how I live. This is not my house, but my family resides here.”

The table was already spread, and we sat down to a repast of broiled chicken, wild honey, Indian bread, coffee, and cream. From the day of my arrival in Honduras I had enjoyed the appetite of a tiger. Such cheer as that of the padre was not long disappearing. After this he uncorked a bottle, and poured out some aguardiente, of which I judged he had already ascertained the quality. From here we proceeded to the *Plaza*, and until nearly midnight wandered among the swarthy groups, their faces lit up by the flames of *bombas* and bonfires.

On the following day the daughter of Señor Garay arrived from Tegucigalpa, and great were the rejoicings in the house. A drove of sheep was brought to the *patio* from the hacienda of *Concepcion*, and half a dozen selected by the old man himself for the week’s feasting. A fine heifer, which had been fattening for the occasion, was slaughtered, pastry made, and the

festivities, if possible, increased thenceforth. Like most of the *viejos* of Olancho, my host was an epicure. Varieties of little stews and savory messes were always placed before him at table, which he usually desired me to assist in dispatching.

He also possessed the art, from long practice, of concocting certain delicious drinks. Among these was one to which I invariably paid my respects. It was made from tamarinds, and usually served about noon from earthen jars, wrapped in several thick swaths of flannel, and placed in the draft as a cooling process. The preparation of this beverage was simple enough. From a cask of the fruit, which seemed to have been crushed to a pulp and liberally mixed with the coarse sirup of the country, a quantity of thick liquor was drawn off, in a partly fermented state, and diluted to a drinking consistency, which, when settled, was turned into jars. To this was added powdered cinnamon, allspice, or some fragrant herb (gathered in the neighboring hills), to suit the taste. The liquor, without the spices, is often used during and after fevers.

Señor Garay was also very fond of a marmalade of orange, which he had served up in small platters every evening before bedtime. The preparation contained a slight infusion of vanilla, and some other aromatic substance possessing narcotic properties, for which reason, doubtless, the old gentleman ate it himself, and hospitably desired his guests might sleep soundly during the night.

Several beautiful *tamarindos*, conspicuous for their spread and their pale-green leaves, straight trunks, and irregular branches, grow in the streets and gardens of Jutecalpa. The fruit contains from four to seven seeds; the pods, clustering luxuriantly among the leaves, appear in November, and by January are ready for gathering.

This was the first day of the *funcion*. At early dawn we received notice that General Zelaya, with his family and brothers, would be in town before night. Don Toribio, the second son of Don Chico, arrived shortly after, with a number of women to put the house in order. L—— and I mounted and rode out toward Mamaisaca to meet the approaching cavalcade. Ten miles out of town we encountered them, but, to my regret, without the general. The señora was still grievously ill, and he

dared not leave the house during her critical position. I, however, received a flattering letter from the old gentleman, promising me to be in town during the *funcion*.

We returned with the family, and arrived about noon at a hard gallop. The girls rode side-saddles made in Guatemala. The two daughters of Don Santiago, already referred to, reminded me of the bouncing Green Mountain lasses, generally received as the symbol of ruddy health and good-nature. They were respectively seventeen and nineteen years of age, and as full of life and fun as kittens. Such riding as theirs! After witnessing it, my chief desire was to get out of the way, to conceal my own gawky equestrianism, although, as I had flattered myself, it was a little tinged with the style of the *ranchero* of California. Since childhood they had lived among horses, and every day had scurried over the grassy plains, until to ride had become a second nature. They were attended by half a dozen country gallants from the neighboring haciendas, some of whom regarded my attentions to their loves with lowering brows. But, independent of all other considerations, had I wished to prove any superior claim, they needed only to touch with the spur the spirited animals they bestrode, and a few prances would have forever sealed my fate as a rival. To be a "*buen jinete*" has more advantages than one in Olancho!

On re-entering the town we found a number of horsemen dashing up and down the streets, apparently in the greatest excitement about something, the purport of which we hastened to learn. Don Toribio soon ascertained that a drove of bulls from one of Señor Garay's haciendas had arrived within a mile of the town, and that, in accordance with the immemorial custom, every mounted man in the city was about starting to form a triumphal procession, and drive the beasts into the *corral* prepared for their reception in the Plaza. They had only awaited our return to start.

At the word, not less than three hundred men spurred out of the eastern end of the town, and over a boundless plain tenderly carpeted with flowers and grass, and interspersed with open copses and groves of waving trees. Such a mad scamper, helter-skelter, with the exultant "*Hoo-pah!*" issuing from a hundred throats; some mounted on half-broken horses from the

plains, with the stare of the wild beast yet shooting from their eyes; others dashing off at a tangent from the main body, and trusting to the superior fleetness of their animals, describing a long circle, and again joining the onward moving mass; here a mere boy sitting his leaping steed like a monkey; there a bare-legged Indian straddled an equally untamed horse, without saddle or bridle, but a strong sash passed around the thighs and under the horse's belly, and a contrivance like a head-stall (*el jáquema*) with which to guide him. The ground fairly trembled beneath the beating of hoofs.

In a few minutes we reined in at the base of a gentle hill, where the noise of many voices and the bellowing of cattle indicated the object of our expedition. Without waiting to concert any plan of action, the whole body, now half crazy with excitement, plunged into the trees, from which very shortly issued a number of bulls wild from the cattle-plains, and rendered doubly savage by the goading and other indignities they had experienced on the road. Heads down and tail in air, they leaped away in an opposite direction from the town, and after them spurred the crowd, filling the air with shouts and laughter.

Occasionally one of the bulls would charge at their pursuers, when a general stampede succeeded to get out of reach. Gradually the chase was headed toward Jutecalpa, and after half an hour's run, with numerous deviations to intercept bolting members, the monarchs of the herd were driven into the town, where thousands hastened out on foot to view them from places of security. Here Señor Garay, mounted on a gentle, easy-paced mule, joined the cavalcade, and assisted in the ceremony of *corraling* the bulls, his part consisting in shouting with the lungs of a line-of-battle ship's boatswain, and responding with beaming smiles to the salutations of all. He was universally known, and had claimed the monopoly of supplying the bulls for the *funciones* for half a century, as his ancestors had done before him by hereditary right.

By this time the Church ceremonies had commenced, and all who could not get inside stood reverentially in the *Plaza*, with heads uncovered, responding fervently, and crossing themselves at intervals. Don Toribio smuggled us in through a side entrance, whence we ascended into the choir. All light of day had



been excluded from the building, and a thousand candles shed a pale light upon the tinsel and gilt around the altar. These people seemed to me less *priest-ridden* than any other Central Americans I had seen—faithful observers of the ceremonies, but not slaves to the behests of the Church.

The women, neatly clad in shawls of bright colors, kneeled face to the altar, murmuring *sotto voce*, their responses producing the peculiar humming heard in crowded assemblages. The sermon was delivered by the talented young Padre Cubas, and was attentively listened to by all classes. Although Olancho is a democratic aristocracy, all social divisions are forgotten at the church door, and rich and poor kneel side by side.

The frankincense used in the censers of the Church is the product of a small tree growing in the savannas of Olancho, and generally found near the gum Arabic bush. It is gathered in rough, pale-yellow pieces, resembling parched corn, and exposed for sale in Tegucigalpa and Jutecalpa. Its perfume is very grateful, and is used as a fumigator in sick-rooms in the larger Central American cities. The *estoraque*, or resin of the *Styrax officinalis*, is also burnt in the churches. Several kinds of this are found in Olancho. They are known under the general name of *incienso*. This church has but one article of value, consisting of a massive golden chain, with jeweled ornaments attached, said to have been presented by the robber Quijano on his death-bed, and in consideration of which prayers are ever after said for his soul.

The services over, the rest of the day was devoted to pleasure and merry-making. Passing into the *Plaza*, I found myself in company with twenty mounted gentlemen, some of them sons of rich *hacendados*. The bull-fighting was not to take place until the following day; so, joining them, we rode about the little town, my companions, who seldom visited Jutecalpa, improving their time to see all the sport possible. Races were run, the competitors joining hands, and riding at top speed, side by side, four and six abreast. A procession of masks set the town in a roar with their local jests, and our party of roysterers exchanged smart jokes with every pretty face they met. The women got up a procession, carrying the Virgin, dressed in the exaggerated finery of a country belle, for which service they expected to re-

ceive her special aid and assistance on future occasions of difficulty.

As darkness approached, the scene of the previous night was renewed, but with treble enthusiasm. An illuminated transparency, representing a full-sized bull, was borne through the streets, accompanied by wind and string instruments and a crowd of people. Later, his bullship was placed over one of the numerous bonfires, where he disappeared in a whirl of smoke and flame.



BULL-FIGHT IN JUTECALPA.

On the following day, the rattle of the drum and noise of horsemen awoke us at an early hour. At ten o'clock the first bull was let into the Plaza, in which were two *picadores*, and an equal number of mounted men with lances. All Jutecalpa crowded toward the square. The balcony on the second story of Señor Gardela's house was filled with showily-dressed ladies of the best families, and the veranda below occupied by the not less

flaunting *mujeres del pais*. The heavy oak-barred fence constructed for the occasion was thick with people, perched in every conceivable place whence a fair view might be obtained of the sports.

The bulls had been kept blindfolded and without food since the previous day, and were now roaring with rage. The first one, having his blindfold removed, and no longer imprisoned by the bars, ran quickly out, and trotted with a lordly, defiant air about the Plaza. The bull-fighters stood on their guard. Suddenly he made a quick run at the nearest man, who dodged him, and made for a triangle of heavy posts in the centre of the inclosure; but, before he could reach them, his pursuer had knocked him heavily to the earth. The infuriated creature inserted

his horns beneath his body, balanced him a moment, and sent him like a rocket into the air. The other combatants rushed in and drew off the attention of the animal while the wounded man was borne away. Several ribs were broken, and an arm, besides internal injuries, and he died next day.

This unfortunate commencement threw a chill over the sports for a while, but the circumstance was soon forgotten, and the usual tormenting of the animals continued. The entertainment of bull-fighting, unless conducted on the scale of the great exhibitions at Cadiz and Madrid, soon cloy on the taste of the stranger. The ceremony of saddling and riding the bull exhibits a temerity and reckless courage one is quite unprepared for. A horseman throws his *lazo* over the horns of the bull, and, tossing the end to the crowd through the bars, the animal is dragged, bellowing and struggling, to the fence, where his head is held firmly down while a strong saddle or *albardo* is lashed to his back; the stirrups are shortened, and into this gets some hair-brained *vaquero* without a moment's hesitation. The noose is detached, and away springs the mad beast, rearing, plunging, and moaning with rage. Contortions and leaps are powerless to dislodge the imp astride his back, whose life depends upon his agility and coolness. He excites the applause of the spectators by stretching himself at length on the bull's back, or beating him over the head and horns with a small club carried for the purpose. When weary of the sport, the horned steed is dragged as before to the fence, and the boy dismounting, some other takes his place, or the beast is attacked after the usual method of the *corrida de toros*.

At night the air was ablaze with rockets, squibs, and serpents. For seven days the festivities were continued; horse-racing, processions, and feasting by day, and dancing and social parties by night. My boys, Victor and Roberto, were wild with delight during this time. In sober-sided Tegucigalpa they had never seen any thing equaling the pell-mell, off-hand style of Jutecalpa. They would both have quickly sacrificed their wages to the fascinations of *monte* had I been willing to advance the money. On my refusal, the scamps resorted to trickery, and applied to me for money to buy medicine. I soon after saw my gentlemen hazarding their copper coin at the resistless table. Spaniards

and their descendants are born gamblers. They inherit the passion from the adventurous spirit of the old *hidalgos*.

While watching the excited faces of the players during the *fiesta*, I observed one of the crowd to place a bit of gold upon the table, with which he won a handful of coin. The circumstance reminded me so much of "'49 and '50" in California, that I almost imagined myself in the famous El Dorado of San Francisco, or the Round Tent of Sacramento. I watched the boy until he had finished his game, and then drawing him aside, asked him where he had obtained the specimen I had seen. "Near the *Rio de España*," said he; "I often go there when I am out of money, and dig for a day or two; but it is a woman's business, that gold-digging," he added, rather disdainfully. I asked to see the piece he had staked at the gaming-table, upon which he produced it, with several smaller pieces. The largest was about the size of a walnut, and weighed, by the scales in Señor Mateas Polvon's store, above half an ounce. He had already disposed of several other pieces to the small traders in Jutecalpa, and willingly exchanged what remained for silver coin.

This gold, which I carried, with other specimens, to California, and which has since been taken to New York, was of extreme purity. The same may be said of that found throughout the valley of the Guayape. Its hue is bright yellow, and only the smaller particles are polished by attrition. The larger pieces have evidently been taken out in dry diggings, as they exhibit a rough exterior, and only worn in a few places by the action of rains or wet sand. Some of the specimens taken from the beds of rivers are shaped like muskmelon seeds, but the greater number were of irregular forms, bright as new gold coin, having apparently lain in some pot-hole or whirlpool, where the rotary motion of the water and sand had burnished them for many successive years. These samples assayed 910 thousandths fine, equal to a value of \$18 81 per ounce, which is considerably above the average of California gold. The assay of Mr. Hewston, of the U. S. Branch Mint, will be found in the pages devoted to mineral subjects.

During my stay in Olancho I often found the weather uncomfortably cold, so that the scanty bed-clothing with which I



had passed through the lowlands of Nicaragua and Southern Honduras was insufficient, and I was obliged to make use of coats and other appliances to keep warm at night. There were showers of rain at intervals, but usually a cold, clear sky in the morning, which, as the sun ascended, mellowed the fresh atmosphere into a crisp and balmy state, possessing a peculiarly soothing influence on the mind, and leaving the effect of soft rain-water on the skin. Such weather lasted through the *funcion*. The lively racket of the earlier celebrators always brought me out into a shivering cold air, and there were usually some half-naked little *muchachos* adding fuel to a fire blazing in the *patio*. At night the bonfires on the *Plaza* served the double purpose of an illumination and warming the surrounding groups. Even the dresses of the better classes were the exact opposite of tropical raiment. Instead of thin white suits, with an immensity of shirt-bosom displayed from a gauze jacket cast open to receive every breath of the heated air, the upper classes of Olancho were clad in suits of cloth, with waistcoats of the same material, and odd-looking English stove-pipe hats. In a word, the fashionable dresses were rather those of a temperate climate.

The bells of the church at Jutecalpa were cast many years since, and stories are yet recounted of the pious contributions of the women, who, to propitiate the Virgin, enriched the liquid metal during the process of smelting with dust and *chispas* of gold. Every *hacendado* in that section of the department gave something. There is above 1 cwt. of copper and silver in the four, and doubtless a considerable amount of gold. The copper was obtained from the mines near the valley of Uloa belonging to General Zelaya. It was taken out under his direction, and sent to town with great ceremony during the smelting. The tone of the bells is mellow and deep, indicating the presence of copper and silver.

It would be tedious here to enumerate the various amusements, social parties, and adventures of all kinds occurring during my visit to Jutecalpa. Though serving to illustrate the character and customs of the people, they would prove but repetitions of scenes already described. The routine of my life among these hospitable people consisted in exchanging formal visits, making long horseback excursions into the coun-

try bordering the Guayape and Jalan rivers, writing, searching the old hieroglyphical records of the department, map-making, note-taking, negotiating with the Zelayas, and "talking up" the enterprise and industry of *los Americanos del Norte* at all times and in all places. Intelligent people entered cordially into my views, and met me more than half way in consummating them. Whichever way I turned, kindness and simple hospitality awaited me, and I am unable at this moment to recall any act of rudeness or insult during my visit at Olancho. I should except one instance, where a little Indian, attached to the city residence of General Zelaya, was unable to resist the temptation of a pocket-knife which I left on a table. The theft got to the ears of Don Francisco, who had the trembling culprit brought before him, where he was thrashed like a sack until he revealed the hiding-place of the stolen property. My intercessions were in vain. The hospitality of the old gentleman had been violated by one of his household, and nothing could save the offender from chastisement.

Toward the close of the *funcion*, General Zelaya arrived at Jutecalpa, leaving the señora at Lepaguare, where she was yet ill. Hearing he was on the way, a little party went to meet him on the road. As we re-entered the town, which was while the *Plaza* was filled with people, a general shout, "*Viva el General Zelaya!*" attested to his popularity. He rode a splendid black horse, and received the congratulations of his friends with pride and pleasure.

At his house a grand ball was given on the evening of the day following his arrival. As many as could crowd into the house were there; and after the dancing, when the guests had departed, the general requested a few of his friends to remain, and I had the good fortune to be included among the number. A great bowl of *poncha de aguardiente* was concocted, the fumes of which entered the heads of the guests, and the night was spent in songs, guitar-playing, story-telling, and merry-making generally. If I add that an occasional song in "barbarous English" mingled with the more liquid and silvery Spanish, it will serve to illustrate with how little a good-natured and laughter-loving audience can be pleased. Then, too, any mistake in Tom Moore's words, or the less classic "nigger min-

strelsy," was, under these circumstances, exempt from criticism. Be sure, reader, who may hereafter visit flowery Olancho, that to sing a song, preserve a confident face, and touch a chord or two on the guitar, will be no drawback to success or a kind reception.

General Zelaya was no exception to the "*poco a poco*" rule of Spanish Americans. At Lepaguare he had promised to bring all the necessary papers with him to Jutecalpa; at Jutecalpa he insisted that quiet Lepaguare was the only place for concluding a contract. Any attempt to hurry an *Olanchano* would be but the preliminary step to the destruction of whatever enterprise you may have in hand. An exhibition of Yankee promptness or hurry stamps you as a frivolous, superficial fellow. Accordingly, I swallowed my impatience, joined in the fun, and dismissed all nervous anxiety in regard to expectant friends at home, resolved to "stick" to Olancho until I had my contract "signed, sealed, and delivered."

I was not altogether sorry at the delay; for, setting aside the actual pleasure of existence in these delightful elevated lands, I was anxious to make a trip down to the Indian town of Catacamas, also to visit the ruins of *Olancho Antigua*, the former capital of the department, and to make a personal inspection of the rapids, or *chiflones*, said to exist below the junction of the Guayape and Guayambre. I was desirous of ascertaining whether they could also be ascended by light-draft steamers. Hearing one day of an old woman at Concepcion (a small village eight miles southwest of Jutecalpa) who had some specimens of gold, I started, with the Padre Buenaventura, toward the valley of that name, desiring to see the famous plain through which the Guayape flows, and also to purchase specimens of the gold.

A leisurely ride of two hours brought us to the village of Concepcion, where we dismounted at the door of La Señora Ysabel. The venerable dame came forward, welcomed the padre with a voice like the croak of an expiring raven, and then, shading her eyes with her hand, wrinkled up her features, and took a scrutinizing look at the stranger. I made her a low bow and passed the usual compliments, at which, imagining that she recognized in me the Señor P—— from Tegucigalpa, and, but for

an adroit movement to the rear on my part, would have embraced me with a more ardent affection than I was anxious to receive.

Undeceived in this respect, she invited us inside, and as we had yet to proceed some distance farther before returning, the padre made no delay in imparting the object of our visit. She took down from a jog in an obscure corner an oaken box, from which she drew a smaller one, which I thought had once contained pills. From this she turned out upon the table a little heap of gold dust, consisting of bits from an impalpable dust to the value of a dollar. In shape and color they resembled those already described as coming from the Guayape and its tributaries.

Her daughters, she said, had been *lavaderas* for some years, and were now absent on one of the tributaries of the Jalan. After a little haggling, I purchased the lot, amounting to about two ounces, at the rate of \$12.75 per ounce. As we passed through the village, the padre exchanged very unclerical glances with more than one of the female portion of his flock.

The scenery from any part of the valley of Concepcion is charming. It is a blending of the most delicately penciled hills, forming an amphitheatre, with a vernal plain of surpassing luxuriance. The chain of Carbonal Mountains runs to the southwest along the Jalan; their highest peak (called the "Mountain of Roses," from the abundance of wild flowers adorning its slopes) bearing nearly east from the village, and the Jalan beyond flowing placidly to its junction with the Guayape below Jutecalpa.

We cantered easily along toward an island or mound of green trees some ten feet higher than the plain. From here the view was so exquisite that I determined to remain and witness the sunset. The valley, far as the eye could reach, was a wavy carpet of emerald, with blue and purple hills tumbled up from the farther extremity to an altitude of 1200 feet, and covered with densely-leaved trees. This carpet was stepped upon by some three thousand cattle, and unnumbered horses and mules, while flocks of sheep and goats, returning from the day's pasture, moved slowly toward the *corral*; for the coyote and wolf are abroad in Olancho, and ever on the alert for unguarded



flocks. The whole picture was the quintessence of pastoral beauty.

The setting sun shed long streaks of golden light through the vistas and avenues formed by the trees, and a gentle westerly wind tempered the air and played lazily among the leaves. Our horses, which the padre had provided (not suffering me to use my own), seemed to enjoy the landscape as much as ourselves. Leaving our little *oasis*, if such a term can be applied to a spot situated on a plain itself an oasis, we gave the rein to our animals, and away we streamed, I on a strong-limbed dark bay, and the padre, who rode splendidly, on a beautiful *tordillo*, which he never allowed to be backed by any one but himself. Our race-course was without impediment of rock or ravine, and the padre, who had not yet satisfied himself about my equestrian accomplishments, looked back as he shot past me to see how his competitor fared. His shovel hat and sober garb, with the ease of his seat, reminded me of some descriptions of fighting friars during the Mexican war. He looked a very Padre Jaurata. His horse had decidedly the advantage, and would have continued his slapping pace quite to the Guayape, had not the setting sun and the fading of painted Monte Rosa into the dusky night-shades warned us that we had yet some distance to travel back to Jutecalpa.

Stopping at a small hacienda to buy some sweet limes, we cantered homeward, and, crossing the Rio de Jutecalpa again, entered the town. The valley of Concepcion is principally the property of Señor Garay, and he expressed his willingness to have the plain the site of a future American town. Jutecalpa, he thought, would not please the Americans, and he repeatedly offered to give me the whole valley when I should return with a colony. There is said to be a wagon road nearly the whole distance from Concepcion to *La Confluencia*, crossing a few unimportant streams, and following the westerly bank of the Guayape. The plain around Concepcion is about ninety feet higher than that of Jutecalpa, and is said to be cooler, but I could perceive no material difference. The valley is reckoned one of the best grazing-grounds in all Olancho.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Precious Woods of Olancho.—The “Cortes.”—El Retiro.—A Gold Mill.—An Olancho Machinist.—Monte Rosa.—Boxwood.—Valley of the Guayape.—San Francisco.—Rio Jalan.—A Forest Scene.—The Mahogany Trade.—Corte Sara.—Preparing for the Cutting.—Las Tortilleras.—Location of the Cortes.—Roads.—Cutting.—Sawing.—Dragging.—Rafting.—*Pipantes*.—Navigating the Patook.—Rio Jalan.—Its Gold Placers.—Americans in Olancho.—The Guayape Gold Region.—Red Plumiria.—Wild Silk.—*Araña de Seda*.—Route along the Jalan.—Quebracha.—A *Fandango*.—Lake of Quebracha.—Don Gabriel.—Hard Fare.—Baked Armadillo.—A Golden Legend.—Hunting.—Toucan.—Tapir.—Blue-winged Teal.—Wild Turkey.—Birds of Olancho.—*Tapiscuinte*.—Familiar Animals.

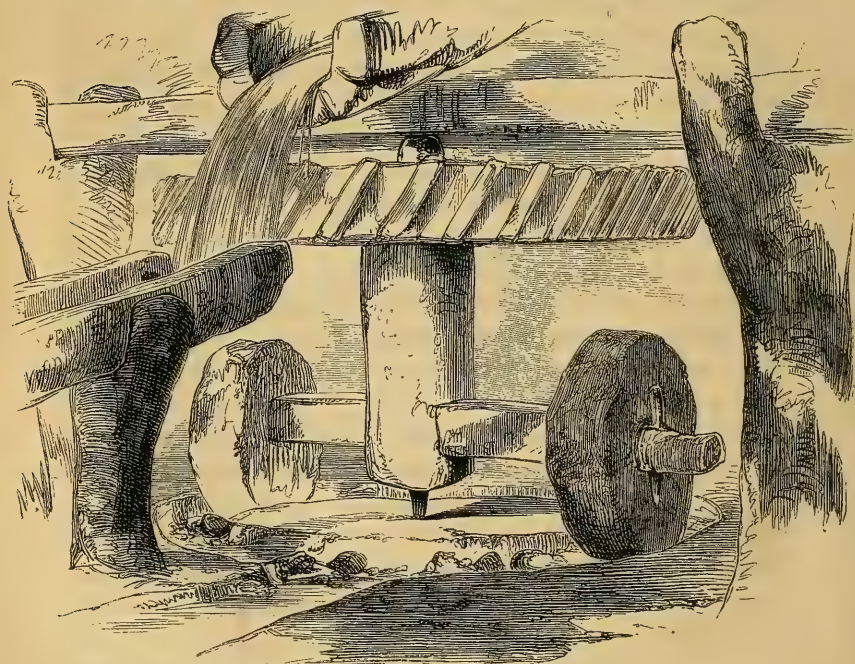
SOME weeks after my arrival at Jutecalpa, I received an invitation from my friend, Señor Ocampo, to visit with him the mahogany-cutting or bank on the River Jalan, known as *Corte Sara*. I had had frequent conversations with him respecting the various localities where his men were at work. These were the cortes Mescales (near the mouth of the river of Catacamas), Frio, on the river of that name falling into the Guayambre, and Sara, on the Jalan. The name of the fourth, near a little village called Alajagua, I have neglected to note, as also the location of the village. Señor Ocampo is also the proprietor of a *corte* on the Lower Guayape, known as Las Guapinoles.

In estimating the resources of the region drained by the Patook, Poyas, and Aguan Rivers, the precious woods are probably entitled to particular consideration (even taking precedence of the minerals), from their vast quantity, rarity, and accessibility. Besides the familiar woods, such as mahogany, rosewood, lignum vitæ, Brazil-wood, logwood, oak, cedar, and ebony, there are a variety of valuable kinds almost unknown to trade or manufacture, which, as Honduras becomes better known, will be brought into general use. Some of these bearing the local names will be hereafter enumerated among the natural productions of the country. The cutting and exportation of mahogany is perhaps the most important branch of industry and commerce. In a country so favored by Nature as Olancho, drained

by rivers connecting its farthest interior with the sea, and traversed by vast belts of the most valuable woods known, the business growing out of such advantages can not fail to take precedence of all others. Extraordinary inducements have been held out by the government for the enterprise of foreigners, and a glance at the extent of territory embraced by Olancho shows the cutting of mahogany to be as yet but in its infancy.

Knowing that I should not have time to visit more than one cutting, I accepted with alacrity the invitation of Señor Ocampo for a journey to Corte Sara. Obligated, as usual, to leave my horse, I was furnished with a strong mule, and, accompanied by my boy Roberto and two mahogany-cutters of Don Opolonio, we set forth at daybreak, in order to reach the hacienda of San Francisco by nightfall, the road leading over the mountain range trending away from Monte Rosa.

A short ride took us well into the picturesque valley of Concepcion, which after traversing some ten miles through herds of cattle, winding among acacias and a variety of gum-trees and



PRIMITIVE CRUSHING MILL.



bushes, we came to the nearest ford, a celebrated mining locality known as El Retiro. Here a Señor Marano had erected a rude *arrastre* or mill, consisting of two large rocks attached to the ends of a vertical beam, and dragged around in a circular trough, carried by the waters of a *riachuelo* flowing into the Guayape. The *empresario* (such he called himself) regarded his crazy bit of machinery with a self-satisfied smile, and inquired if the art of mining had reached that point in *el Norte*. I assured him it had not, and, as usual, loaded his work with praises, which so gratified him that he brought out a calabash of *tiste* from his branch hut for us. The Guayape is here a slow-flowing, magnificent stream, and during the heavy rains must carry an immense body of water. At the time we visited it there were occasional showers, the last of the rainy season. The banks on the opposite side from where we stood were yet matted with the dried *debris* of the late floods, showing, at an elevation of twenty-five feet above the river's present level, where the waters had poured toward the ocean with a depth capable of bearing the steamers of the Mississippi on their bosom.



BREAKING ORE.

Señor Marano had scraped a hole into the hill adjoining the river, from which he brought out, with the aid of two workmen, a species of soft red rock, in which the particles of gold were contained. I wondered at such a display of energy; but he quickly replied, "I am a Guatemalan, señor; these *Olanchanos* would scarcely attempt, I imagine, such machinery as that!" The self-complacency of the speaker was exquisite. I would not have lost the speech for the results of a week's labor with his miserable contrivance of rocks, thongs of hide, and tree-



trunks. He managed, he said, to grind up about five cwt. of rock per day, from which he sometimes got from two to five dollars worth of gold, and sometimes "*nada, nadita*" (nothing—very nothing). Quicksilver he had never used, and generally reduced the pulverized rock by the ordinary panning process—with *bateas*. He was very anxious to have me remain and examine the country in that vicinity; "and, above all," said he, "do not fail to bring your great company here to work this vein." So we parted, and I afterward heard wonderful stories about El Retiro and its former wealth.

I saw enough, however, to convince me that, with a Californian quartz-crusher capable of working thirty or forty tons of rock a day, to replace the primitive contrivance of Señor Marano, this, among other localities, could be made to yield a fortune to the adventurous miner.

My new acquaintance promised to have some specimens for me on my return, and, after an exchange of *cigarros*, and a hearty "*to God*" from the señor, we entered the river, and forded it, with the water nearly deep enough to float away our animals. From the eastern bank we began a gentle ascent toward the range of Monte Rosa, the slope of the hills wooded with pine, cedar, mahogany, and the usual variety of the Olancho forest. Here I first noted the boxwood-tree, used for engraving. The tree is tall, with bright, smooth, yellow bark. A likeness of President Cabañas is said to have been taken by an American at Comayagua on boxwood found in the valleys of Western Honduras.

Monte Rosa is about 1600 feet above the plain of Jutecalpa, and from its summit is obtained the most superb view imaginable: range upon range of blue mountains, intersected with belts of silver, denoting the courses of the principal rivers, and the cattle-plains spreading out like flower-gardens among them. Below us, to the right and left, flowed the Guayape and Jala, while far away the broken ridges showed where these and the Guayambre, joining their waters toward the northeast, formed the great Patook, passing now through extensive plains, or thridding the rocky passes of the dividing ridges.

Descending by a tortuous path, we struck off to the northeast, toward the hacienda of San Francisco, eight miles distant, which

point we reached about sundown, having performed since morning, *via* El Retiro, a distance of some twenty-two miles. San Francisco is the property of Señor Bustillos, and is one of three estates belonging to him. It was quite dark when we arrived, and, after a hasty meal, I was glad to tumble, half asleep, into my hammock, without troubling myself about the beauties or oddities of the place.

Roberto awoke me at early dawn, and, after an ablution in the brook flowing into the Jalan, we started for the *corte*. The hacienda stands at the entrance of a dense growth of tropical forest, in which the mahogany was the predominating tree. The surrounding mountains, densely wooded, were, as the *mayor-domo* informed us, a famous locality for the vanilla plant. These mountains are a low, semicircular range, shooting off from Monte Rosa and the Carbonales. Don Opolonio here negotiated for a few head of cattle, which accounted for his deviation to the northward from the road to Sara.

The Jalan at Corte Sara is a considerable river. It flows slowly and deeply to the northward through a hilly, undulating country, and is here crossed with a *pipante*, or canoe. Cattle have often died here, becoming stuck in the alluvion bordering the stream, where they resort to drink. For several miles to the north and west, and for an unknown distance eastward toward the Guayambre, the country is a dense forest, out of which the large rafts of mahogany and other valuable woods are obtained, floating down that river and the Jalan to the Guayape.

It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the solemn grandeur of these forests; darkness, even at midday, envelops their dusky vistas; no temple reared by art could equal the awe-inspiring sublimity of their cathedral arches, no organ compete with the swelling anthems of the wind rolling and rustling among their venerable trees. Long, pendent ropes of *laines* droop from the lofty limbs to the ground, presenting a lace-work of green leaves and vines, interspersed with spots of red and purple, to indicate the presence of rare and nameless flowers. The night-blooming cereus, and the *pasalte*, spotted like the wing of a gorgeous butterfly, mingled their hues with the luxuriant air-plant, the whole viewed as through a glass darkened. The *ceibas*, of lofty proportions, with hanging gardens made by

the rooting of parasites among their limbs, stand bearing aloft great mats of verdure, far beyond the reach of man except when leveled by the axe. Through the roots, at long intervals, I noticed, as we traversed them, the remains of roads leading to the now discarded *cortes*, from the vicinity of which all the available timber had been cut. Even Corte Sara itself, Señor Ocampo said, was becoming exhausted, and doubtless, ere this, has been abandoned. About forty men are employed by Señor Ocampo at Corte Sara. This is one of twelve *cortes* in the entire department.

Without doubt, Olancho takes precedence of all other sections of Central America as a mahogany-producing region, its alluvions and the banks of all its rivers bearing inexhaustible forests. This tree rises in majestic beauty above the surrounding woods, and, excepting the palm, is the tallest of the vegetable kingdom in Honduras. Its branches spread far and wide, amply clothed with perpetual foliage, and, aside from being an important article of export, its wood serves many purposes of life, such as handles for tools and weapons, canoes, building material, and household furniture.\*

Along the entire coast, from the Motagua to Cape Gracias á Dios, the rivers are bordered with forests of mahogany, and, though not in equal quantities, those discharging into the Pacific are found also to abound in this valuable timber. The Ulua, Chamelicon, and its lower tributaries, the Limon, Roman or Aguan, the Tinto or Black River, the Guayape or Patook, and the Great Wanks, flowing into the Caribbean Sea, are each the scene of mahogany-cutting operations, which, greatly increasing in the last thirty years, have scarcely made a mark in

\* "It is one of the most majestic and beautiful of trees. Its trunk is often 40 feet in length and 6 feet in diameter, and it divides into so many massy arms, and throws the shade of its shining green leaves over so vast an extent of surface, that few more magnificent objects are to be met with in the vegetable world. Honduras mahogany is in logs from 2 to 4 feet square, and 12 to 14 feet long; but some logs are much larger. Like the pine, it thrives best on dry, rocky soil, or exposed situations. That which is most accessible in Honduras grows upon low, moist land, and is decidedly inferior to that brought from Hayti and Cuba. But the Honduras has the advantage of holding glue admirably, and is, for this reason, frequently used as a ground on which to lay veneers of the finer sorts. The produce of one tree was once 3 logs 15 feet long and 38 inches square."—*Lib. Ent. Knowl.*, vol. on *Timber, Trees, and Fruits*.

the boundless wilds teeming with this and other precious woods. Some of the most accessible locations are yet virgin forest, untouched, and will doubtless remain so for many years. On the Ulua, Mr. Follen, American consul, is said to have conducted the most extensive cuttings in the country, the government having granted him valuable privileges for certain considerations. Much of the wood is shipped direct to the United States, though considerable quantities reach Balize, in Yucatan, and help to make up the extensive cargoes which for many years have gone from that port to Europe. Within five years, in connection with Señor Fernandez, two Englishmen have established mahogany-cuttings on the Roman, the proceeds being rafted to the bar of the river, where it is said vessels of two hundred tons may load.

Stations also exist on the Black River; those on the Wanks have of late years been obstructed by the rafts of drift-wood which have accumulated at the mouth of the river. The Wanks mahogany trade was formerly of sufficient importance to pay for the cutting of a navigable canal from the main river into the little anchorage of Gracias á Dios, through which rafts were conducted to the shipping. This is reported to be filled up by the alluvial deposit from above.

On the Pacific coast of Central America, bordering the Bay of Fonseca, the mahogany trade has been attempted with some success since the establishment of the California trade. Several cargoes have been shipped both to California and Peru. Rafts of mahogany, brought from the low lands about the Rivers Goascoran and Choluteca, are landed at Tigre Island, towed by bongos across the bay to the saw-mill at the free port of Amapala, where limited quantities are sawed. Near Acajutla, a sea-port of San Salvador, are forests of mahogany and other valuable woods, which at this time are exciting the attention of San Francisco capitalists; but the mahogany trade on the Pacific side of Central America will yet require many years to become remunerative and permanent, there being no sure market for the wood, and no attempt having been made, as in Brazil-wood and log-wood in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, to ship it to Europe.

On the coast of the Caribbean it forms the most remunerative business, and is the chief source of the revenue of the republic



of Honduras. The export duty is inconsiderable, collected by officers who are easily bribed, so that not a tithe of the taxes is ever collected. Capital, and great intelligence and industry, are requisite for the successful prosecution of the mahogany business. One *corte*, or bank, often employs during the season from thirty to fifty workmen, who are paid weekly, and supplied with provisions packed and dragged over made roads, or carried in canoes many leagues into the interior.

In times of scarcity these supplies must be brought in *pipantes*, or *pitpans*, from the sea-ports, or up the rivers from vessels anchored at the bar, a journey often exceeding a month down and back. Most of the cutting done in Honduras is under the auspices of English and European houses. The mode of cutting and sending mahogany to market is nearly the same in all parts of the Spanish Main. In Balize, Tabasco, and other more frequented *dépôts*, modern improvements are doubtless introduced; but the method now pursued on the Guayape, Jalan, and Guayambre will perhaps serve to illustrate that of Honduras, or at least the eastern section, which is, as yet, the scene of limited operations.

The routine of seasons allows but six months in the year for the business. Early in December the proprietor of the *corte* commences to assemble his people, many of whom are Jamaica blacks, whose habits and muscular proportions peculiarly fit them for such laborious work. At this time the proceeds of the last season's work have usually been expended in gay regatta shirts, red sashes, and various articles of finery for themselves and women, or oftener has disappeared at the *monte-table*, so that at the call of the *patron* all are ready to renew the toil. All useless articles are left behind, the laborers working in nearly a state of nature.

The *cortes* are but temporary villages of palm-thatched huts, placed as near to the river as the locality of the best timber will permit. Most of the choppers are obtained from Jutecalpa, and the bustle of preparation wonderfully enlivens that place for a few days previous to their departure, when, accompanied by a number of women (*tortilleras*), the parties make for their respective *cortes*, under the guidance of the woodman or hunter, who is usually selected from among the most experienced and intelligent of the Jamaicans.

Señor Ocampo's gangs were subdivided into bands of eight or ten each, with its leader or "boss;" the women, acting the part of cook, receive the weekly rations from the steward of the *corte*, and are paid a small salary for this duty. Attempts have been made to introduce corn-grinding machines, and thus dispense with the women, who, it appears, do not confine their talents to culinary avocations, and are the fruitful theme of fights and jealousies between the *bravos* and the negroes, constituting rival claimants for the favor of *las tortilleras*. At Galeras I saw near a dozen of these machines piled up as worthless trash: they had been summarily expelled from the mahogany banks by unanimous outcry, the women being the most clamorous against this attack upon their time-honored privileges; and the *tortilla*, with its laborious, snail-paced process of manufacture, was duly reinstalled, amid the triumphant rejoicings of its defenders.

Arrived at the *corte*, the gang proceeds to erect huts, or to repair old ones, while the huntsman, who now becomes a man of great importance, makes his way into the forest, and, after long deliberation, selects the most eligible places for cutting. Upon his judgment rests, to a great degree, the season's success. The location should combine, as nearly as possible, proximity to the river, the intervening country such as can be crossed by built roads; the trees should be numerous enough to avoid a second construction of roads during the season, and so situated as to avoid the clearing of much timber. A place combining all these facilities, however, is rarely met with, and the cutting of paths for the exit of the wood after felling is usually a considerable part of the labor. The huntsman is provided with a conch, which he sounds from time to time, and which is answered by his companions.

Roads are often built directly to the river, the conch serving as a guide; for, amid these vast and silent forests, the dense underbrush presents an impenetrable barrier to the progress of man or animal. Señor Ocampo, I believe, enjoys the exclusive privilege of cutting mahogany in this section, and therefore meets with no such opposition or rivalry as exists in British Honduras (or Balize), and other points on the Spanish Main. Stagings are raised around the trunks of the trees about eight feet from

the ground, two men being allotted to a tree. The wood from the trunk is preferable to that of any other part, but the limbs generally afford the most variegated specimens, such as are used in the construction of finer work. The spectacle of a falling mahogany-tree is one which could not be easily forgotten. Toppling from its firm base, the giant of the tropical forest crashes upon the surrounding foliage, tearing through huge branches, and beating down with its widespreading arms an immense space in the thicket. Unlike the fall of the pine, this tree seldom splits or breaks, its vast strength bearing down all obstacles.

It is common to assert that life in the tropics is attended with none of the vigor of constitution ascribed to more temperate regions, and that labor, in the American acceptance of the term, is next to impossible. The supposition is significantly disproved in the mahogany banks. Not only does this work require, through all its phases, the severest muscular exertion, equaling that of the Herculean raftsmen and choppers of the Penobscot, but in all Central America the fame of the mahogany-cutters for strength and power of endurance is widespread and recognized. Indeed, I doubt if, on an equal footing, the best Northern woodsmen could successfully compete with those of Honduras.

When a sufficient number of trees have been felled to occupy the rest of the season in sawing and teaming, they are separated into logs from eight to sixteen feet in length; some trees turning out five, and others not more than two. The logs are sawed with reference to their circumference, as many are of such size that the entire force of the gang is required to get them upon the drags. Crosscut saws are used exclusively for the business, which, like all industrial implements used in Honduras, are imported from England. After being squared, to remove all the weight possible, the logs are raised, by means of wooden levers, up an inclined plane to a level with the drag, which is of immense strength, and stands lengthwise with the log. When at the top, the burden is easily rolled upon it, and now commences the most laborious part of the work. The drag is often dispensed with, and the logs drawn singly, with chains, to the river. They must be conveyed to the *embarcadero* be-

fore the setting in of the rainy season, which commences in May, and if the operations of chopping and sawing have occupied an unusual time, the dragging is conducted with great energy.

After the first rains, which last usually for a week, the roads, however well they may have been built, become impassable. The premonition of dense fogs and portentous clouds are sure indications to the mahogany-cutters of the approaching storm. The work is now continued night and day. Sundays and *días de fiesta*, on which the Catholic creed of the workmen exempts them from labor, are sacrificed to the urgency of the occasion; *aguardiente*, double rations and pay, and every other inducement likely to tempt the workmen, are offered. The noonday heat along the low river bottoms forbids the task of teaming except at night. The drags are, therefore, loaded and started at an hour which will admit of reaching the river by early morning.

At such times the forest echoes with the yelling of drivers and the heavy scraping of the drags as they move slowly through the tangled wilderness. The cattle are preceded by boys carrying pitch-pine knots, serving to light the way through what would else be Egyptian darkness; for even at midday the rays of the sun scarcely penetrate these silent solitudes, through which the huntsman is sometimes an entire day in cutting a mile, and the ground is an almost impenetrable mat of creeping vines and thick bushes. As the procession slowly advances, the oxen, sometimes attached eight yoke to a drag, are often forced to the ground in their struggles, or are maimed by the deep interstices of the road.

When the application of the goad, bringing blood with every thrust, fails to raise the exhausted creature, he is unyoked, and his place supplied by another from the *corral*, the failing animal answering for *carne* for the next day's consumption. The flickering blaze of the torches serves to throw a picturesque glow athwart the scene, lighting up the swarthy, haggard faces of the men, penetrating the Gothic aisles of the dark woods around, and shedding a ruddy light upon the rude implements, bare breasts and arms, and grotesque costumes of the laborers.

Arrived at the river, the logs are tumbled in, and if the *embarcadero* is on any of the tributaries of the Guayape, they are



allowed to drift to the main river, at a point about a league above its junction with the Guayambre. Plugs of cedar or pine are driven into each end of the logs before committing them to the river, to assist in floating the wood. The first rains swell the rivers to such a degree that there scarcely seems an outlet for the turbid waters poured into them from the roaring mountain affluents above.

The task of safely piloting the logs to the sea now commences. As is elsewhere remarked, there are several *chiflones* or rapids in the Guayape below the mouth of the Guayambre. In periods of high water these are safely navigated by the mahogany rafts, and Señor Ocampo assured me he has rarely lost a log among the thousands he has intrusted to the current. They are attended by some of the gang in pipantes or canoes, usually "dug-outs" from the cedar and *ceiba*.

This river craft varies from twenty to forty feet in length by about four or five in breadth. The ends are elevated, and sharp pointed like a northern fishing "pinkey." Over the stern a series of semicircular ribs are stretched, covered with cloth, serving for the *chosa* or cabin, in which the scanty stores for the voyage are stored.\* Paddles are used to navigate through the more rapid currents, and thus prepared, the last act of the mahogany business is performed in descending the broad Patook to the ocean. During the trip, which usually lasts from six to eight days, the *pipanteros* land at times amid the wild solitudes on either hand, and supply their wants by hunting, or from some circling eddy drag out a struggling *cuyamel* or catfish. Sometimes they stop to chaffer with the Indians inhabiting the region of the Lower Guayape and Patook. These are scattered parties of the Guacos and Poyas tribes.

Señor Ocampo, who made numerous trips down the Guayape to the mouth of the Patook, represents the Indians below the

\* The pipantes or pitpans described by Herrera as encountered by Don Bartolome Columbus in the Bay of Honduras were probably similar to the largest now used on the Patook or in the Bay of Fonseca. Those seen at Panama, and which perform fruit voyages down the New Granadan coast, will probably better answer the description. That above referred to was eight feet in width, and as long as a Spanish galley. An awning or roof of palm-leaves and mats was built over the middle, under which the women and children were protected from the rain and spray of the sea. It was laden with goods from Yucatan.

Rio de Tabaco as entirely uncivilized and wild. Sometimes, in descending the river, he came upon small canoes as he rounded some abrupt turn, containing squaws on fishing expeditions, who, at sight of the approaching raft, would paddle with all speed to the bank, snatching up the pipante, and disappearing with it in the woods.

These pipantes are shallow and lightly constructed, though of considerable length. They have a very gradual curve at either end, to facilitate their passage among the rapids and over the timber and logs passing down the river at certain seasons. On approaching these floating obstructions, the Indians ply their paddles vigorously until the canoe has darted with the swift current nearly upon the logs, among which the waters are hissing like a boiling caldron. At a signal, they jump into the



PIPANTES LOG-SHOOTING.

stern, raising the bows of the frail vessel out of the water, while, with the velocity of a frightened deer, she glances across, carried by the current and her own impetus. While taking their flying leap, the little crew dexterously resume their seats, and become again motionless as statues, except now and then a touch of the feathery paddle into the water, like the nervous play of a dolphin's tail, to guide their rapid descent.

The mahogany vessels along the coast of Eastern Honduras are mostly small schooners, and used as *droughers* to Balize, whence their cargoes are shipped in large vessels to Europe and the United States. Señor Ocampo had as yet sent down but a small portion of his logs. He informed me that at his various cuttings he had above three thousand logs, which had cost above \$100,000 to place in their present position. In enterprises of this kind, the law obliges foreigners to associate themselves with natives of the state or other Central American states, and thus the London house with whom Don Opolonio was connected placed their capital against his enterprise and management in the interior. Although one of the ultra Servile or Conservative party, and married to the sister of the renowned General Guardiola, Señor Ocampo enjoyed the confidence and respect of all classes, irrespective of party.

We remained at Corte Sara two days, making short excursions into the woods, examining the works and habits of the cutters, and taking an occasional trip up or down the Jalan in the *pitpans* or *pipantes*. A small stream, known as *el Rio Sara* (or Rio de Corte Sara), taking its rise toward the hacienda of Quebracha, flows to the eastward of the corte, and empties into the Jalan a few miles below. All the streams flowing into the Jalan above Corte Sara are said to be gold-bearing, increasing in richness as the head-waters are approached.

The gold-washings of the Jalan are less popular and not so well known as those of the Guayape. It is at some distance from and midway between the two centres of population, Danli and Jutecalpa, and is not resorted to as much as are the creeks and little streams nearer those places. The gold of the Jalan is inferior in quality to that of the Guayape, which has become famous throughout Central America, and denominated "*el oro mas apreciable*." That of the Jalan occurs in thin scales, while that of the Guayape, though mixed with this description of gold, is principally in minute rounded particles, averaging the size of a radish-seed or a small pin-head. I did not hear of any diggings near Corte Sara. The gold region of the Guayape proper may be included between the latitudes of 14° and 15° N., and the longitudes of 85° 30' W. and 86° 30' W. This embraces a territory sixty miles square, and containing 3600 square miles



of country. The rivers running parallel or adjacent to the Guayape and their tributaries embraced in the above limits I include as the "Guayape Gold Region."

Among the flowering trees on the banks of the Jalan I noticed one bearing clusters of pale red flowers, with an odor resembling the mignonette. The tree was about sixteen feet in height, with large, oblong, ribbed leaves. Some of these flowers were gathered previous to the feast of the Virgin at Jute-calpa, and placed around the altar and the figure of the Virgin. A botanical friend, from my description, supposes this to be the *Red Plumeria*.

On this trip I noticed the silk-cotton-tree (*ceiba*) of a larger size than I had yet seen it, although found throughout Central America. There is also an indigenous silk growing wild among the trees of Olancho, the production of a species of silk-worm constructing a large bag two feet in depth, depending from trees of the open savannas. At a distance the nest resembles a huge, closely-matted cobweb. The animal makes no cocoon, but weaves the silk in layers and skeins around the inside of the nest. But one instance is known of any available use being made of the silk by the natives. Señor Jose Ferrari, of Tegucigalpa, represented that in 1844 he sent six pounds of the raw material to England, where it was made into handkerchiefs, not easily detected from the common silk, of equal strength and delicate texture. A profitable trade in this might be established, as it can be had in any required quantity simply for the trouble and expense of gathering.

An old Mexican author, referring to the resources of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, speaks of the wild silk as a valuable and plentiful production of Tabasco and Oaxaca, adding that, at a stated season, the natives were accustomed to gather it for exportation to Spain. The article, from its description, is doubtless identical with that of Olancho. There is also a curious silk-producing spider, called the *Araña de seda*, found in various parts of Nicaragua and Olancho. It is often seen hurrying along the corridor with a load of fine silk on its back, from which it trails numerous delicate filaments. This insect is entirely harmless, so that the Señora Montealegre at Chinandega allowed one to crawl leisurely over her hand. In Olancho they are



quite common. There is also a spider in this vicinity known as "*Araña pica caballos*," or the horse-biting spider, from its attacking the hoofs of animals, causing them to decay, separate, and fall off. Horses are often ruined in this way.

Instead of returning by the hacienda of San Francisco, we turned to the southward on leaving Corte Sara, and, following the valley of the *Jalan*, rode toward the hacienda of *Quebrachacha* (Break-axe), pronounced and generally written *Quebracha*, and named after a valuable wood, famous for its flinty hardness. Though the distance up to Quebracha is not above ten miles in a direct line, I think we must have traveled nearly twice that distance in avoiding the *pantanos*, or swamps bordering the eastern bank. An impenetrable jungle forbids any passage along the opposite side. Don Opolonio promised me some good sport at the hacienda, where was a lake, into which flowed the numerous rivulets we were now crossing. Fish and game were plenty, and though I had neglected to bring my rifle, he knew from experience that guns and fishing-tackle were to be obtained at Quebracha. From eight o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon we rode through alternate undulating savannas and black alluvions, until we reached a heavy belt of trees, through which we discovered a broad valley or plain, with an extensive hacienda just beyond the woods. We set spurs to our animals, and, emerging upon a grassy slope, drew up at the hacienda.

The sound of music and the clapping of hands, mingled with loud and merry voices, showed that the few inhabitants were engaging in a fandango, an exhibition I had rarely witnessed in the country. As we rode up, the applause had subsided and the dance recommenced. Our arrival causing no interruption, we drew nearer and joined the spectators, who turned away for an instant to say "*Adios, señor!*" to Don Opolonio. It was near sunset. Hemmed in by the woody heights to the east and west, the little hamlet was the only evidence of civilization in view. To the southward lay a beautiful lake, a mile in length by a few hundred yards wide, reflecting the trees and hills around. Horses and cattle, as usual, roamed over the plain, and from the woods, in which part of the lake was hidden from view, came the distant notes of marsh-birds, cranes, and spoon-



SPANISH DANCE.

bills. The breeze came over the lake, lapping with tiny waves the beach below.

Unscared by the sound of the rude guitar and the accustomed proximity of the dancers, birds flitted about among the trees, and made themselves participants of the scene; the coffee-colored *nazareno* especially, whose peculiar snapping came in at intervals — no mean substitute for the castanets, unknown to these primitive people, but in Spain considered an essential accompaniment to the fandango. The dance had long ago been familiar to me in the Havana and

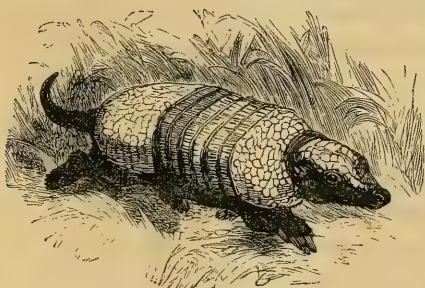
the South American republics, and I was curious to observe what influence situation, climate, and the mixture of races might have brought about in an amusement so completely national.

The number of dancers, young men and girls, was ten or twelve. A few old people, children, and dogs sat at the porch and beneath the trees. A slim and pretty *muchacha*, with brilliant eyes, and complexion heightened under the excitement, was for the moment the leading heroine of this little *ballet* in real life. Two young men, the favored lover and his aspiring rival, with “Djalma” complexions and earnest faces, represented in varieties of attitude and movement the passions of love, jealousy, hope, and despair, met by *la coqueta* with alternate coldness and approbation, disdain or relenting tenderness, ending in grand finale with a whirl of intoxicated joy. All the dancers in turn took precedence, the others filling in the minor details of the pantomime. On the whole, if less seductive than the more polished movement of the *bolero*, the fandango of Olancho is quite as vivid and agreeable.

Before the dance was completed we had been joined by a good, jolly-looking man of some thirty years of age, who, after welcoming us to the hacienda, familiarly chid his old acquaintance, Don Opolonia, for pouncing thus unexpectedly upon him, when his larder was not so bountifully stocked as usual. He had known for several days of my arrival at Jutecalpa, and now, for the first time, I learned that the speaker was one of the sons of Señor Garay, and that Quebracha ranked among the haciendas of the old Croesus.

Our appetites somewhat sharpened by the ride, we were not over-scrupulous as to the quality of the fare that might be set before us. It was coarse enough, consisting of a sloppy soup, in which the ingredients appeared to be a bucket of water, half a dozen plantains, and a large piece of cow. Don Gabriel Garay was no such epicure as his glorious old father at Jutecalpa. Before retiring for the night, I saw a couple of urchins slowly devouring something which they pulled forth by the handful from an antiquated stewpan in one corner. It was a mass of baked meat, the odor of which, to me, was uncommonly savory. On inquiry, I found this to be the flesh of an armadillo, killed in the neighborhood the day before. I was not long in presenting a third candidate for the dainty dish. The meat was very palatable, and as delicate as chicken.

It is usual in some parts of Olancho, especially toward the coast, to bake these little cavaliers whole, without separating the flesh from the coat of mail with which nature has provided them. The process is to dig a hole in the earth, making a layer of heated stones at the bottom. The animal is laid upon these, and covered with an "upper crust" of flat stones, over which a hot fire is kindled. Stuffed with bits of fat, plugged with wedges of suet, like an Italian beefsteak, and flavored with some aromatic herb, the most fastidious gourmand would pronounce it a faultless dish. The armadillo of Olancho is usually about



THE ARMADILLO.

twenty inches in length, of a dark brown color, and hurries precipitately out of sight at the approach of danger. The Indians frequently hunt them for food.

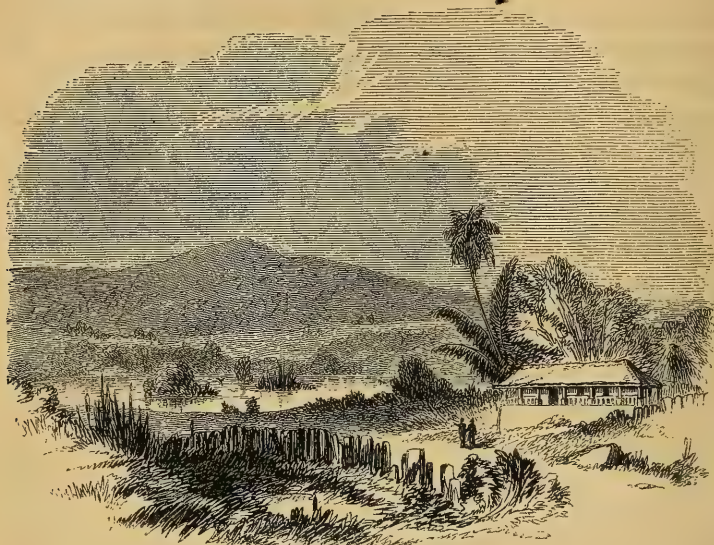
On the following morning I met an old *vaquero* from Culmí, a town about forty-five miles to the northeast of Jutecalpa, who occupied my attention for an hour with a rapid and almost unintelligible account of the *dias antiguos* of Olancho, as transmitted to him by his father, who had died at an advanced age some years before. Standing on Table Mountain, Carson's Flat, Mormon Island, Bidwell's Bar, or any celebrated gold locality of California, where the proceeds have been reckoned by millions, I should have no hesitation in retailing the statements of the old *Olancho*; but, for obvious reasons, I prefer they should remain, at least for the present, among my rough notes. The *facts* are of sufficient interest without reference to the exaggerated legends of a superannuated, garrulous Indian.

Agreeably to a promise made on the preceding evening, Don Gabriel furnished us with ammunition and two old English fowling-pieces, and, thus equipped, we followed the bend of the lake in quest of game. We had hardly entered the underbrush when a beautiful bird, which I believe to have been a toucan, called here *pica de navoja*, or razor-bill, flew heavily up, and, immediately alighting, ran with the speed of a water-hen into the reeds. The toucan of Olancho (also called the *feliz*) has a sharp bill, with which he snaps up marsh insects and worms. The motions of this gaudy gentleman were too quick for us, and neither got a shot at him.

We pushed on, however, and, as we separated to approach from two points a flock of aquatic birds navigating the upper part of the lake, Don Opolonio put me on my guard against *lagatos*, as the alligator is here called. I kept my eyes open for them, but, although the reeds were sometimes portentously agitated, I got no ocular demonstration of their presence. In the upper part of this lake, the tapir, or *dante*, as it is here called, is said to have been seen. This beast I often heard described, and should judge him to be a formidable animal. He is said to break his way through the heaviest jungle when pursued, never shows fight, is quite harmless, and affects shady, secluded places. On the lower Guayape I was shown the path of a tapir, through



which the animal was wont to pass when going to drink ; but, in all my peregrinations through Central America, it was not my good fortune to meet with one, though I took special pains to come in their way.



LAKE OF QUEBRACHA.

We made the circuit of the lake, and met on the western side without seeing any thing worthy a shot, but as we were preparing to return the bevy of water-fowl reappeared from behind a clump of reeds, and into their midst we both poured the contents of our muskets. Four of the aquatic party remained struggling on the water. The two which we succeeded in obtaining were specimens of the beautiful blue-winged teal, or mountain duck of the North. I had often noted them in the air, and descending the Salto Mountains had raised a flock of them from a marshy meadow toward the foot-hills. The male is of brilliant plumage, wings black, white, and changeable green, a trifle smaller than the Northern bird, and wearing a tuft of black feathers upon the head, which can be elevated or depressed at pleasure. The legs are yellow, and in flying produce a singular creaking noise, as if some miniature machinery in them needed oiling.

The wild turkey (*pava*) may often be seen in Olancho along

the hill slopes, particularly near the brooks, where they seek a retreat during the heat of noonday. The sportsman exploring his way through the thicket is sometimes startled with their heavy *whirr*; or should he proceed cautiously, he will, perhaps, see the male, with outstretched neck and curious eye, watching his motions from some lofty limb. He is somewhat heavier than our domestic turkey; is of a glossy black, with a becoming top-knot placed jauntily on his head. This ornament forms a comb like that of the rooster, but differs in respect to material, being composed of a dozen black tufted feathers, two inches high, and prettily tipped with yellow. He is often domesticated, and in this state is sometimes known as the *pajuil*. The curassow, quail, rice-bird, swallow, *aldeano* or yellow-tail (famous for their villages of hanging nests); blue, white, and gray heron; *chorcha* (not the woodcock, as the name implies, but a small, yellow-breasted, black-winged songster, about the size of a thrush, and heard only at morning and evening), ibis, and two birds of the order *Gallinæ* of Linnæus, described by Henderson as frequenting the colony of Balize, where they are known respectively as the crax and the quam (*Penelope Cristata*)—these are all found in the lowlands and along the river bottoms of Olancho. The male of the crax, by a reversion of the usual order of Nature, is much smaller and less gaudily feathered than the female, who steps haughtily among the dried heather, displaying a brilliant chocolate plumage, with variegated spots of black and white on her neck and pinions. The dove, wood-pigeon, and several other birds already mentioned are common to nearly every part of Central America.

There is also an animal resembling a ground-hog, called the *tapiscuente*, covered with fine brown hair, and of the size of a gray squirrel. This little fellow creates sad havoc among the yuca and frijole fields, where he burrows like the gopher of California, making horizontal excavations extending many rods, with here and there an air-hole, from which his comical snout and two watchful eyes may sometimes be seen, but dodging out of sight at the slightest noise. The *tapiscuente* frequents Quebracha, where he has established no enviable reputation. With him keep company the armadillo (the three, eight, and nine banded), the gibeonite (*cavia paca*?), a little leaping animal between



THE AGOUTI.

the squirrel and Guinea-pig, and often confounded with the Indian cony or agouti; the curious ichneumon, the opossum, raccoon, porcupine, red squirrel, and ant-eater.

These animals are more or less abundant in all the low country of Honduras, and probably are found from on the Atlantic coast from Panama to Guatemala.

## CHAPTER XX.

Fishing at Quebracha.—Plants and Flowers.—Cayamucla.—Cinnamon-tree.—Lobelia.—Sassafras.—Wild Indigo.—Sarsaparilla.—Manner of Collecting.—Flaxseed.—Plans for the Future.—A Trip to Palo Verde.—Silver and Copper Mines.—Marble.—Loadstone.—Cinnabar.—Preparations for Catacamas.—Mountains of Jutequile.—Solitude.—A Trout Stream.—India-rubber-tree.—Trade.—The *Jippa*.—Ornithological Music.—Clarionet-bird.—Telica.—Conception Flower.—San Roque.—Mules and Horses.—Breaking a Colt.—Palms.—*Vino de Coyol*.—Hacienda of Herradura.—Gold Legends.—Gold Net-sinkers and Horseshoes.—A curious Will.—“The good old Colony Times.”—Olancho Viejo.—Separation of the Party.—*El Boqueron*.

WE passed three days at Quebracha enjoying the hospitality of Don Gabriel, and during that time I was initiated into the mysteries of hunting and fishing. The lake abounds in a very palatable little fish, resembling the dace of New England, and a good-sized variety of trout, known here as the *guapote*. They are easily taken with hook and line, biting eagerly at worms or insects. As for trees, shrubs, and flowers, I at last gave over attempting to note their variety. Amid such a profusion, only the patience and the knowledge of a professed botanist could hope to distinguish or appreciate them. “*No se, señor*,” was almost invariably the answer to my inquiries, or, with a careless shrug, “*Quien sabe?*” (who knows?). At any moment I might be crushing heedlessly some inestimable medicinal shrub or plant, or brushing past a tree whose precious products, properly collected or prepared, would well repay the trouble of obtaining, to say nothing of the pleasure in thus ferreting out of Nature’s wildest garden treasures of botany or gems of the floral kingdom.



Don Gabriel described a plant called *Cayamucla* (or teeth-fall-out), common in Olancho, possessing the singular quality of salivation, whence the name. I obtained a written description, which represents it as a pliant, juicy stalk, growing to the height of three feet, supporting a single pale yellow flower the size of a common lily, which blooms from March until May. The odor of the flower, if inhaled, swells the face; and the juice of the stalk or the leaves of the flower, if applied to them, will sensibly loosen the teeth. Cattle instinctively avoid it, and experiments are said to have produced on dogs effects precisely similar to salivation. I afterward learned that the *cayamucla* is not unknown in Nicaragua.

Roberto had noticed my pleasure in examining strange plants, flowers, and birds, and never lost an opportunity of gratifying my taste. One day he brought and laid in my hammock a bundle of bark, which he said could be obtained in any desirable quantity in the "*monte*." It had the shape and the peculiar pungent flavor of the cinnamon, but was somewhat darker. He called it *canela*, and promised to show me the tree from which he had obtained it. I then remembered to have tasted this bark in the bowl of *poncha de aguardiente* made in Jutecalpa at the *funcion*, where it was called cinnamon. Though resembling cinnamon, I am not prepared to class it as such. It may have been some bark as yet unknown.

There is also here a species of *lobelia*, to which medicinal properties are ascribed from the fact that horses are said to burst after taking a small portion of a leaf into their stomach; it is thus known as *Reventa caballos* (or horse-burster). It is found in cool, secluded places, where horses and cattle are apt to stray during the heat of the day. The plant is doubtless a subtle poison, and to its presence has been thought owing the loss of so many horses and cattle along the *Jalan* and *Guayape*. *Sassafras* and wild indigo are also found in this vicinity, as well as throughout the whole of Olancho.

The *sarsaparilla* (vine of thorns) grows wild in nearly all parts of Honduras, but in Olancho it forms one of the most important branches of Indian industry, considerable quantities reaching *Truxillo* from the interior, all of which is gathered by the natives, who, at certain seasons, make regular excursions in



search of it. The vine, which is armed with small thorns, may be easily distinguished. When beyond the vicinity of trees upon which to climb, it winds itself among rocks and bushes, to which it clings tenaciously. The root extends some distance into the ground, and is of a grayish-brown color, but sometimes found scarlet or red. Most of what is collected is sold in small parcels to the dealers in the interior towns, who separate it into two qualities. These are made up into bundles weighing from two and a half to four lbs. each, the roots doubled into lengths of a foot, and secured by fibres of the vine. These are packed in bales of from three to five *arrobas*, and generally sent to the nearest sea-port. The medicinal properties of the sarsaparilla are scarcely recognized in Olancho. Small bundles of the root may sometimes be seen for sale on the Plazas, but its virtues are only taken for granted through the foreign demand for it.

Flaxseed is cultivated with great success, but is also found growing wild. It is retailed by the women in Jutecalpa by the copper dollar's worth, and seems to be used exclusively as a medicine.

On our return to Jutecalpa, which we reached by crossing the *Jalan* and the *Guayape* at *El Retiro*, where I again met with *Señor Marano*, I found that *General Zelaya* had returned suddenly to *Lepaguare*, called thither by a new phase in the *señora's* illness. To have gone any where but to the house of my old friend *Señor Garay* would have been to put an unpardonable affront upon that dignified worthy, and, accordingly, back to his ample *casa* we turned, *Don Opolonio* taking leave of me at the door, and trotting away to his own residence.

The old gentleman, after hearing my adventures with great apparent pleasure, assured me that thirty years ago *Quebracha* was a famous sporting-place, where every summer he had been wont to repair with a few companions, erect pavilions on the banks of the lake, and indulge to satiety his favorite pastimes of shooting and fishing. He had not been there for many years, and seemed delighted with my favorable account of it. This was another place he promised to *give me* if I would return with a colony. When I asked him to draw up a contract to that effect, he answered,

“No, no, *hijo*; you Americans are too apt, I hear, to flatter

us, but never perform all you promise. Come back with an industrious colony, and if I am yet alive, you shall want neither for lands, nor documents confirming them to you."

"But," I said, "if you draw up conditional writings with me now, it will be all the easier to induce the good and industrious people you speak of to come to Olancho." The old man only repeated his frequent expression,

"Let me see Olancho once more prosperous before I die, and I shall follow my fathers contented and happy."

Finding that, during the illness of the señora, there would be no probability of my securing the attention of the general at Lepaguare, I resolved to remain a few days at Jutecalpa to make preparations for the trip, and then, with the padre, who had several times proposed the journey, start for the famous Indian town of Catacamas, situated about thirty-five miles northeast of Jutecalpa, though, by the route we intended to take, not much less than twice that distance.

While the padre was concluding his arrangements, I made several short excursions toward the small hamlets around Jutecalpa. Don Sebastian Ayala, *jefe politico* or prefect of the department, desired me to accompany him to the silver mine of Palo Verde, about ten miles west. The señor had once been an *empresario*, and professed to have a thorough understanding of the mineral capabilities of Olancho. Leaving the river of Jutecalpa on our left, we struck over toward the great *Valle Arriba*, or Upper Valley, bounded on the north and east by the picturesque mountains of Jutequile.

The mine, which has been for an indefinite number of years abandoned, is said at one time to have yielded such vast amounts of silver that the family owning it used to send their silver four times a year to Truxillo, whence it was shipped to Spain for investment. I obtained specimens of ore from this place, containing evidences of virgin silver. Señor Francisco Verde afterward gave me three specimens of ore, found at this place, at Yocón, fifty miles northwest of Jutecalpa, and at Junquilla, between Jutecalpa and the trading town of Jano. At Junquilla there have also been found specimens of copper ore, said to exist there in such quantities as to tint the earth green with the metallic wealth beneath. The whole, copper, ore, and stones,

contain gold. Señor Verde affirmed that "the entire country around Yocon is impregnated with silver, and that scarcely a stone can be picked up in any direction but has some proportion of silver." Near Quebracha there is also a silver mine, but I had no means of ascertaining its resources. I proposed to visit, with my informants, the various localities designated; but, with their want of punctuality and the impossibility of my keeping every appointment, I was obliged to take the statements of my entertainers *cum grano salis*.

Doubtless the statements are greatly exaggerated, as are probably all those brought to my notice respecting the gold placers; but, after clearing them of the haze of old legends and the natural tendency to enlarge noticeable throughout Central America, there remains enough of a strictly reliable nature to entitle Olancho to a prominence among mineral regions second only to California and Australia.

The value of the silver mines of Olancho I am unable to state with any degree of certainty, as all my accounts are from hearsay; but I am convinced that they are well worthy the attention of capitalists, and may be made to yield remunerative returns.

Of the copper mines I can speak with more confidence, as they occur in all parts of Central Olancho, and have been openly worked for a century. Those in the valley of Ulua, northwest of Lepaguare, have produced immense sums. As early as 1712, mule-trains of copper were sent from Jutecalpa to Tegucigalpa, where the ore and metal were smelted "*for the gold contained in them.*" Near Yocon, pieces of pure copper, like that of Lake Superior, are found, in which the percentage of gold is remarkably large.

There are also mines of jasper near the town of Silca, or a species of yellow, brown, and green quartz, called *jaspe* by the natives, and which I am quite willing to believe is the real stone of that name. I saw no specimens of it, but heard it very frequently mentioned when conversing with the natives on the natural resources of Olancho. Blue and white marble of a very fine quality exists in the mountains toward Yoro, in the department of that name. These quarries have never been worked, and probably will remain untouched for ages, unless developed under the auspices of a race superior in activity and industry to

that now occupying Olancho. At Lepaguare there are also promising indications of beautiful marble.

While at Jutecalpa I heard of a large fragment of loadstone found in the mountains near Jano, where it was stated that any desirable amount of it could be procured. This was said to possess the somewhat startling property of repulsion as well as of attraction when applied to steel; the former power emanating from one side, and the latter from the other. A needle suspended by a thread in a glass of water approached or retreated as the loadstone was turned in the hand of the operator. So many persons attested to the truth of this that I determined to note it for future reference.

Iron is said to have been discovered in Olancho, and cinnabar to exist in several localities. I have every reason to believe this from the descriptions given in long conversations, during which I took particular pains to cross-question my informants, and the statements never varied. I am still more inclined to the belief from the indisputable authority of the most scientific gentleman of Honduras, Señor Jose Maria Cacho, late Minister of Finance of the republic. In a letter addressed to me, dated Llanos de Santa Rosa, February 23d, 1854, he requests a description of the method of working the New Almaden quicksilver mine in California, as he had ascertained the locality of several mines of cinnabar in the department of Comayagua.

The mine of Palo Verde is now filled up with stones and earth. Trees of many years' growth envelop even the ancient works, and during the rainy season the matted foliage probably hides the entire place from view.

From what I could learn in relation to the mineral wealth of Olancho, I became gradually convinced that, with the commencement of "legitimate" mining, such as that now practiced in California, the country will send forth sums of gold destined to create an excitement equal to that of any mining *furor* of the last ten years.

The Zelayas assured me that by the time of my return they would be prepared to listen to my proposals. The padre had now completed his arrangements, and, with my oldest servant Victor, we took the road for Catacamas.

The horses were brought to the door, and, leaving the court-



yard, we cantered out of the town, receiving a courteous salute from Don Francisco as we passed his house. We stopped on the road to drink some nicely-prepared chocolate, and finally turned toward the little town of Telica, situated below the northern slope of the Jutequile mountains.

Among the wild plants pointed out by my observant companion was the *rubia*, or Honduras madder, and we afterward found its stalks thrust across the path in many places. The Indians on the Lower Guayape sell this plant and the *xiquilite* for coloring purposes. This madder, I believe, is fully equal to that of Holland and New Zealand, of which not far from the value of \$2,000,000 is said to be annually imported into the United States. Endless quantities might be cultivated in Honduras at trifling expense. The root, a long, perennial creeper, of a deep red color, with lateral branches or stems, sometimes serves for food for wild hogs. The leaves are of an oblong or lanceolate shape.

From the plain we ascended the grassy slopes of the range, and, reaching its summit at noon, entered a still pine wood stretching along an extensive piece of table-land, through which ran a silent stream. Here we encamped for an hour, while the boys bestirred themselves to prepare coffee. The prospect from these hills back toward Jutecalpa was very inviting and extensive. Only the towers of the church peered above the mass of trees. The padre had exhausted his topic of Catholicism, and, being of rather a luxurious turn, he fastened his hammock between two trees, from which certain unmistakable sounds soon indicated that he was asleep.

While Victor was below dipping up the water for coffee, I reclined myself on a mossy rock forming one side of a little basin receiving the waters of the stream. It was deep, gravel bottomed, and as transparent as glass. Motionless on the opposite side, midway between the bottom and the surface, as if suspended in the air, was a beautiful speckled trout.

For some minutes I sat motionless on the rock, smoking and watching the tyrant of the brook. At last his feathery fins waved to and fro, and deliberately he glided toward my side of the pool, and, disappearing in the shadow of the rock, soon came out in company with a Mrs. Trout, and together they made

the circuit of their little dominions. The unusual shadow at that time of day had excited their suspicions, and they were now holding counsel as to its probable cause. A slight movement of my hand sent them darting into the inner recesses of the rock, from which they did not again emerge.

This little incident recalled the loneliness and deserted condition of the country. Scarcely an object within the extensive range of our vision indicated industry or civilization. No sound of man or distant bark of dog, but utter silence, amid which I remembered the far-off scenes of busy life as one recalls an indistinct dream. Even the usual signs of solitude, the sighing of winds through the trees, the buzz of insects, or the bark of the squirrel, were here wanting. A professed hermit might here have found a congenial spot. Roberto and his companion dispelled the illusion by snapping a dried stick as they kindled the fire.

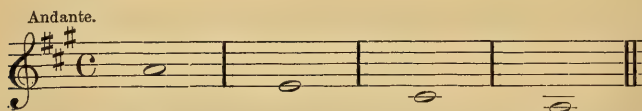
The padre awoke with the fragrant odor of the coffee, and we pursued our journey toward the northeastward. Conspicuous as we wound down the narrow path appeared the odd-looking *ule*, or India-rubber-tree (*Siphonia elastica*). It is known by its round, smooth trunk, protected by a light-colored bark, and sometimes reaches to the height of fifty feet. The leaves form in clusters, three together, of a thin, delicate texture and ovate form, usually a foot in length, and having the centre leaf a little longer than the others. The fruit is a curious affair, somewhat resembling the peach, and is eagerly eaten by some animals and birds. It is unpalatable, and divided into three lobes, each holding a small black nut.

The trees—here called caoutchouc—are tapped in precisely the same manner as the Vermont farmer obtains the juice from the maple. The wound emits a yellowish, creamy liquor (*gum elastic*), which in Honduras is allowed to run into holes in the sand, forming a dirty, flabby substance, very unlike the superior article brought from Para. A coarse kind of paper is also obtained from the tree, made from its bark. No practical use of the India-rubber has ever been made in the country to my knowledge, but some small and inferior lots have been shipped to Boston by Señor Prudot from Truxillo, and remains unsold in the loft of Messrs. Nickerson at that place. The article,

properly cared for, could be turned to profitable use; but there yet lacks the requisite knowledge and industry.

A very curious bird should also here be mentioned, as, in passing a thicket of *jicoral*, we heard its strange song. A rivulet crossed the path, and as we paused to water the horses, our attention was directed to the music and its feathered composer, who stood on a low limb to the right of the road. In shape he resembles the common wild pigeon of the Western United States. His motions were lively and graceful as he bridled about his perch like a cock-dove in the cote. His color was a light brown, and the breast apparently saffron or orange-colored. He is found nowhere out of Olancho and Segovia, where it is known as the *jippa* or *hippah*. The notes of this bird are repeated with great distinctness at regular intervals, and constitute nearly the scale from five to seven notes. The song, which is wonderfully accurate, is delivered with force, and in the effort the bird dilates its throat to a remarkable extent. Of its habits I could obtain no particulars; and I should add that this was not the first time I had heard the peculiar strain of the *jippa*.

This may possibly be the bird described by Byam, page 158, as the "clarionet bird," with a succession of notes like the lower octave of a clarionet, running down the scale from the keynote to the third, fifth, and octave, slow, but rich and powerful. These are correct in the semi-tones, and are thus represented by that author:



He also describes another bird, and gives the following as an illustration of his song, which was so remarkable that he took the notes from a guitar on his return to his forest cabin in Segovia, and wrote them down:



The oddity of the last song is its only recommendation. The first, however, is doubtless the *jippa*, the name of which he does not give. A number of Central American travelers testify to the existence of this bird, some of whom have verbally assured me they have heard the notes in the silent forest, but had never been fortunate enough to get a sight of the musician. I am not aware that any ornithologist has described this, or several others which appear to be peculiar to Central America.

On reaching the foot of the Jutequile range, we entered a labyrinth of cattle-paths, from which it was difficult to select the *camino real*. We at last came to a tangled wild wood, and directly lost our way. Pushing along, however, we beat through a cobweb of vines, stretching down like stalactites from the mossy limbs above. We often bent to the horses' necks to avoid the stubborn branches that every where intersected the way. After leaping a number of gnarled trunks, decayed limbs, and logs, we pushed onward in a better path, and heard a dog bark in the distance. Following the sound, we broke our way through the woods to the outskirts of the secluded little hamlet of Telica.

The first house was that of *la Señora Mendez*, who, with her children, was squatted around a fire at their evening meal of *tortillas*, wild honey, and cream. They all sprang to their feet as we brushed up, and seemed alarmed at our sudden appearance; but the padre, who had cantered around, and now entered the little clearing from the opposite side, appearing with his honest face, he was known in an instant, and all shouted a noisy welcome. The door opened, and a cripple crawled out on all fours to look at us; he, too, had his welcome for the padre, which was heartily returned.

While conversing with the people, and sharing their evening meal, I observed some magnificent crimson flowers, some fourteen inches in circumference, on a tree near by, and asking the cripple what it was called, he replied, "the Conception flower, señor." It receives its name from the circumstance of its blooming during the time of the feast of the Conception. At a distance, the tree, covered with these showy, shield-like flowers, was one of the finest sights imaginable. The odor was rather offensive.

We left the house, and rode to the little parochial residence



of the padre of Telica, Señor Fiallos, who entertained us to the extent of his means until morning, when we set out for the hacienda of San Roque, about two leagues farther to the northeast. San Roque is owned by the wealthy Bustellos family, and has several thousand head of cattle, mules, and horses. Seated near a fire at the door was a *vaquero*, who, with a lighted torch, was singing from his leathern leggins hundreds of little white insects called *agarrapatas*, attaching to them in riding through the bushes. These are smaller than the "tick" of the North, but irritate the skin by their bite, and are really a serious annoyance at certain seasons in traveling. Here we seemed to have got beyond the gold region. The same legends and wonderful stories were ready for the listener, but the scene of the ancient gold digging was laid toward the southwest, in the dominions of the Zelayas.

Some of the finest mules in Olancho are found on the haciendas in this vicinity. Those of Olancho generally, though too soft-hoofed for long-continued mountain travel, are the best animals produced in Central America. The shaggy little mountain mules are much more enduring and hardy, and for that reason preferable to those of the lowlands.

There are no statistics of the mules and horses in Olancho. There are many cattle estates having from three hundred to a thousand head each, and some which far exceed that number. The animals are usually small, slightly made, active, and capable of great endurance. Large droves are annually sent to San Salvador and Guatemala. The value of a horse, taken *ad libitum* from the corral, is from ten to fourteen dollars; broken to the pacing gait, they command from forty to eighty dollars. Mares are seldom broken or mounted. Mules are in higher estimation than horses, owing to their greater hardiness and value as pack animals. The value of a common mule is forty dollars, but from two to three hundred dollars have been refused for *andadoras* or pacers. Some of these last are groomed after the fashion of the country, and in the rainy season kept under cover.

The method of breaking the mule to the pace is by connecting the two right and the two left feet by thongs of hide, which force the animal into an awkward movement, limiting the steps to a certain length, and obliging him to lift the feet to twice the

usual height. Thus fettered, he is ridden an hour or two. After a month's tuition, if the process has been commenced at an early age, the animal has acquired a delightfully easy pace, here considered the perfection of equestrian motion.

In Honduras the wealthy hacendador aspires to the reputation of being a thorough farrier, preserving within the recesses of some old cabinet a variety of rude veterinary instruments, with which he delights to operate upon such animals as may require it.

While at San Roque, a *manada*, with a number of wild colts following the mares, was driven into the principal *corral* or pen. The object was to catch and break these young animals, who were pointed out by the mayor-domo as the crowd of horses leaped the lower bars, and coursed round the inclosure with wild and vicious looks. The colts to be broken first were selected, and quickly secured with the *lazo*. From here they were led starting and trembling into the *patio*, wild as zebras. They were thrown upon the ground, blindfolded, and the ears tucked under the frontlet, to exclude sight and sound as far as possible, a young aspirant for equestrian honors sitting on the head of the animal to prevent his struggling. The *jáquima*, or headstall, being firmly placed, the boy sprang away, when the horse, with a terrified snort, gained his feet; but, feeling the strain of the *riatta* attached to his nose, he darted blindly about the yard, sometimes dashing heavily against the fence, or suddenly leaping among the group of spectators in the porch.

At last, exhausted with his efforts, he stood panting and trembling, when the *vaquero*, feeling gently along the extended line, approached, and gradually accustomed the animal to the touch of his hand. The operation of saddling now commenced, which required the greatest caution. Convulsive starts and kicks accompanied the operation until the saddle was firmly girted, when one of the boys sprang into it. Once there, and all farther resistance was useless. Fixing his bare feet firmly into the stirrups, the rider bent forward and skillfully twitched away the blindfold, when the horse, wrought to desperation with fright and rage, dashed through the entrance and sped away into the plain. Every contortion of body, wild leaps and plunges, seemed only to afford the swarthy little monkey the utmost delight.

His "*hoo-pah*," followed by a fearless yell, mingled with the savage snorting of the noble creature he bestrode, but neither he nor the passive group of spectators manifested any anxiety.

After half an hour's curvetting the horse showed symptoms of fatigue, when his rider, getting him more in hand, ran him at full gallop in half mile circles over the greensward, and only returned to the house when the animal, completely exhausted, his flanks flaky with froth, had succumbed to the art of the rider. Half a dozen such exercises, and the horse is pronounced *aman-sado*, or tamed.

We remained several days at San Roque, where I had an opportunity of noticing many of the rare plants and trees I had elsewhere examined. The sweet potato was also growing here. Palms of the most luxurious foliage tower above the plain. A professed botanist would be required to obtain a correct list of the variety of palms of Central America. Besides those which are commonly seen, there are many that are unknown beyond the secluded land that nurtures them, except by the local name given by the ignorant inhabitants, or perhaps descended from the aboriginal Indians. Its uses are multitudinous. According to Humboldt and Van Martens, the native obtains from the numerous varieties of the palm, sugar, flour, salt, oil, wine, weapons, thread, wax, utensils, food, and habitations! The tree is the feature of the tropical landscape, and in Olancho its luxuriance exceeds, it is said, all other parts of Central America.

Of the above curious list of productions of the palm, I often tasted the wine obtained from the species called the *coyol*, and hence known in Honduras as the *vino de coyol*. The *corrosa* palm, bearing a palatable nut, not unlike the pistachio in flavor, resembles the *coyol* in size and foliage; but the former produces no nut, while the juice known as palm wine yielded by the latter causes sickness and cutaneous eruptions.

The coyol is principally valued for the delicious wine, so celebrated in the tropics for its vinous sweetness and the quantities that issue from a single tree. Among the Indians it is customary to climb this palm, and, boring a small hole immediately below the leaves at the top, insert a small tube of a hollowed reed or rolled leaf, through which the sap flows into a calabash suspended at the end.

On the haciendas the tree is hewn down, and, after being shorn of its crown of leaves, is dragged to the house, and an incision, perhaps a foot square, made near the end. This is covered over, and in a few days is found filled with the wine or juice of the tree. After this, about three quarts a week are regularly obtained from this source. It has a white, wheyey appearance when new, and is very refreshing. After two days fermentation takes place, when it assumes an intoxicating power, and becomes a pungent, luscious beverage. A tightly-corked bottle of new coyol will burst on the second day after being drawn from the tree. Most families have their *coyol* near the house. The expense of cutting and preparing it does not exceed a real. A tree usually yields from five to six gallons before becoming exhausted. It is sometimes mixed with wild honey, and proffered to the visitor as a great delicacy. Unlike the *corrosa* wine, that obtained from this palm is beneficial in many diseases, and is considered particularly efficacious in fevers. At San Roque we were constantly regaled with this beverage.

At noon on the following day we left the hacienda, and traversing a well-wooded, undulating country, but suffering with drought, we arrived at dark at the estate of *La Herradura*, or the Horseshoe. This estate differs little from the principal haciendas of this region. The buildings are small and in bad repair. Some thirty persons reside here; and the proprietor, Don Ignacio Meza, a young *Olancho*, who had just taken to himself a wife, walked out to receive us, but quickened his pace into a run on recognizing the Padre Buenaventura.

We entered the house, and were introduced to the señora, a blushing *muchacha*, who welcomed us to the hacienda with cordiality and no lack of natural grace. The little *Arroyo de los Zopilotes* flows near the house, and discharges, it is said, into the Guayape some ten miles to the eastward. During part of the year it is dry.

Among the legends of Olancho is that from which this hacienda received its name. As to its truth, the reader must form his own opinion. Don Ignacio related that in the days of his ancestors gold must have been plentier than iron, and in proof of its abundance, that a golden horseshoe was found on the es-



tate, "and consequently," said he, "it must have been cheaper in those days to use gold than iron."

"What became of the horseshoe, señor?" said I; "and why is this the only one that was found? It seems to me that more than one horse must have cast a shoe."

"Ah! those profligate ancestors of ours probably had the shoes melted down into coin after the destruction of Olancho Viego. But this is not all. You know gold is very heavy."

"Yes, señor; but what of that?"

"Why, in the early days of Olancho, the fishermen had nuggets of gold to sink their cast-nets in the river. The pieces have been found in the bed of the river with holes in them, made for the purpose of fastening them to the nets."

"Where were these pieces found, señor?"

"Oh, at *Aleman, el Murcielago*, and other places on the upper river, near the estates of the Zelayas."

The padre corroborated this statement, and said he well remembered when there were stories current of such discoveries. Fearful of putting a stop to these details by expressing a doubt, I continued,

"What else do you remember, Don Ignacio, of the old chronicles?"

"You have heard of the will of Señora ———, at Manto?"

I had heard of this document at Jutecalpa, but desired my host to repeat the narration, which was in substance as follows:

"More than two hundred years ago the gold was first discovered in Olancho, and every body had as much as he could take care of. It was so plenty that with a stick one could go and dig out *a pound* in a day."

"A pound, señor!" said I, incredulously.

"Yes, señor; and more than a pound—more than a pound. The ancestor of Señor Ayala, at Jutecalpa, had at one time fifty pounds of gold in his house, which he obtained of the Indians by trading with them."

"It is true, Don Guillermo," added the padre. "He was one of our richest men. But that was not surprising. If you will look into the writings of the old Spanish authors, you will read of the celebrated gold mountains of St. Andres, in the Department of Comayagua; there they found equal quantities."

“Well,” continued Don Ignacion, “in those days, señor, there was *too much* gold. Ship-loads—millions—went to Spain to swell the king’s treasury; he had a fifth of all that was dug. In those days an old woman who had not been long residing in Olancho died, and left by her will seven head of cattle, and five horses, and half a *celemine* (half a peck) of *chispas*, nuggets, and dust of gold, but with the condition that, though the gold could be disposed of as pleased the heirs, the cattle and horses must be kept in the family.”

“And why was this?”

“Simply because, in those days, the raising of cattle had only commenced; cattle were scarce and valuable, but gold—any body could get it that had a mind to dig for it.”

“But what about Olancho Viejo, señor, that I heard you just now mention?”

Here Padre Buenaventura assumed the thread of discourse, and said,

“You have heard me speak of that doomed city before now, my friend. It is a subject that the *Olanchanos* are not fond of discussing; but I shall tell you, nevertheless, that it was God’s judgment that destroyed it, to punish a wicked and sacrilegious people.”

It was evident that the padre was not desirous of speaking about Olancho Viejo in the presence of our host; but I had already heard enough at Jutecalpa to excite my curiosity, and I had made up my mind to visit the ruins on our route.

The will or testament above referred to is said to be deposited in the old parochial records in the town of Manto, about forty miles from Jutecalpa, and formerly the capital of the department after the destruction of Olancho Viejo. Jutecalpa eventually superseded it, owing to its more favorable location.

Early on the following morning Don Ignacion had prepared for us a palatable breakfast, and after repeated “*adios*,” and injunctions to pass the night there again, he answered with a low bow my salutation to *la Niña Benita*, and our little cavalcade swept rapidly away from the hacienda.

At a distance of ten or twelve miles out of our path stood the range of mountains, the loftiest peak of which, known as the *Boqueron*, or Great Mouth, had, according to tradition, opened

and destroyed the ancient capital. A huge rent, resembling the place of a land-slide, was visible, and where an opening in the dense forest permitted, could be seen immense rocks, tumbled about in dire confusion as by some great convulsion of Nature. The mystery which had always attached to the place, and the superstition of the natives as to the probable cause of its destruction, awakened my curiosity as we approached; and, for the first time, I intimated to the padre my intention of visiting Olancho Viejo.

"It is a place shunned by the virtuous and well-disposed, my friend," said he, "and I should be unwilling to incur the fate of numerous persons who are said to have perished by a similar exhibition of ill-judged curiosity. Let me advise, *hijo*, that we keep on direct to Catacamas, and not trouble our heads about that accursed place. Besides, the servants will not accompany you on any consideration."

All my entreaties were in vain; and, as we had now arrived at a point where to proceed toward the eastward would increase our distance from the ruins, I stopped my horse and again begged the padre to accompany me; but, either from superstition, or a disinclination to diverge from the path, he absolutely refused. Finding I was bent on going, he assured Victor that there was no danger, and that he must make the trip with me. Encouraged by this, my boy reluctantly prepared for the trip.

"Meantime," said the padre, "I will continue on to El Real, which is on a plain path from here distant about twenty miles by the windings, and you shall follow me there to-morrow. The hacienda of Penuare is but a few miles on the eastern slope of the hills, and you will easily find it by the cattle-paths. Since you are determined to see the ruins, note every thing of importance, and let me know. *Adios, amigo!*" and the padre wheeled his horse toward the road to El Real, and, with his servant, was soon out of sight.

## CHAPTER XXI.

The Legend of Olancho Viejo.—*La Corona de Cuero*.—A Golden Statue.—Destruction of the Town.—Desolation.—Appearance of the Ruins.—Hacienda of Penuare.—*Chichilaca*.—Bees.—Honey.—El Real.—Padre Morillo.—Skeleton Cattle.—An *Olanchano* at Home.—A Touch of the *Calentura*.—*La Higadera*.—English Enterprises.—A Marriage Story.—Alligators.—The Road to Catacamas.—Scene at Sunrise.—Adventure with a Cougar.—The Ferine Animals of Olancho.—Catacamas.—Appearance of the Town.—Trade.—Indian Inhabitants.—A Ride to the Guayape.—A Macaw Convention.—Feather Robes.—Scene on the River.—Santa Clara.—Deer Stalking.—*Quebrantehuesos*.—Veg-etable Ivory.—A Death Scene.

VICTOR packed my blankets on his horse, and preceded me in the path toward the ruins. By his account, obtained from others, it appears that, excepting the *vaqueros*, who sometimes ventured near in quest of stray cattle or mules, few had had the audacity to approach the site of the old town since, by some convulsion of nature, it was destroyed. The story he related was the same in effect that I had before heard, and was in accordance with the natural superstition of a secluded and primitive people of the Catholic faith.

The great wealth of Olancho in olden time had centred at the ancient town, which was once a sort of local emporium of fashion and luxury. The owners of cattle estates resided there, and collected immense treasure by mining operations on the Upper Guayape, and by purchasing gold of the Indians. The inhabitants, however, were niggardly ; and, although they had such quantities of gold that the women wore nuggets of it in their hair, they withheld their hoards even from the Church, and were consequently stricken by Divine wrath. In one of the churches a golden statue of the Virgin had been ordered by ecclesiastical authority, but the people were slow with the necessary contributions. The body of the statue was completed, but there being an indifferent supply of gold for the crown, the sacred brows were enriched with a "*corona de cuero*" (a crown of hide). The padre of the church protested ; but these infatuated wretches, un-



mindful of the wealth they were enjoying by the special favor of the Virgin, snapped their fingers in the face of this holy man!

The infamous desecration of the Holy Mother was speedily avenged. While the population were collected in the church, the mountain broke forth with terrific violence, and in an hour the whole town was destroyed with showers of rocks, stones, and ashes. Many were killed, and the remainder fled affrighted out of the place. After the destruction, some few ventured back, but were seized with sudden sickness and died on the spot. Those who escaped set their faces to the north, and journeyed to the coast in search of another site, carrying with them the crown of hide, which alone had been preserved from the general wreck. They pitched upon what is known as Olanchito (little or new Olanchó), now the chief town of the department of Yoro after Truxillo. Here they erected a church, where may yet be seen (so says the legend) the identical *corona de cuero*, lying at the feet of the figure of the Virgin, an emblem of Almighty wrath, and the manner in which impiety is punished.

This very Catholic narration, however, does not tally with Juarros, who names Diego de Alvarado as the founder of San Jorje de Olanchito in 1630. But the purposes of the Church were served, and, as was the case with some of the old chronicles, the truth of history was a secondary consideration to the advancement of the true faith.

Comparing all statements, traditionary and others, I was doubtful whether Olanchó Viejo had been overwhelmed by a volcano or by a land-slide. But, though there are no evidences of volcanic eruptions on the Atlantic side of Honduras, I was inclined to the former, having, from the hills near Jutecalpa, observed the mountain ridge immediately overlooking its site, and on clear days distinctly seen the chasm, possibly an ancient crater, whence had issued the eruption.

Within a mile of the ruins we came to a jungle, broken with deep pits, fallen trees, and climbing parasites, passing laboriously through which we at length reached the object of my search. The town could never have been a large one, probably not containing more than three or four thousand inhabitants. A more desolate spot could not well be imagined. These were no state-



OLANCHO VIEJO.

ly or distinguished ruins : no fallen pillars were here ; no shattered statues or broken fragments of architectural design, no monument of art or luxury. The wind stirred ominously among the leaves, which seemed to whisper of musty legends and deeds of the early adventurers. The atmosphere of the place was altogether wild and solemn, and well calculated to excite awe in the minds of the naturally superstitious.

I could discern only occasional traces of adobe houses once clustering in neighborly fraternity ; but the winds had scattered far and wide the very dust to which they crumbled. A few square stones, resembling hearth-stones, suggested yet sadder thoughts of scattered kindred and the broken ties of home. A scanty vegetation had overgrown the desolated waste. Victor crossed himself, and uttered his universal exclamation, "*Caramba !*"

We fastened the animals to a tree, and penetrated into what appeared to have been the Plaza, and a heap of crumbled adobe denoted the site of the church.

"Well, Victor," said I, "here we have the punishment of the

sacrilegious ; but as we are good Christians, we need not fear at this late day."

"I don't know, Don Guillermo," he replied, "but I dislike the look of things here very much. Let us quit, and make for the house of Señor Ordoñez toward the river."

But I had not yet satisfied myself, and we proceeded cautiously toward the foot of the mountain. The scene increased in strangeness as we advanced. Here and there grew still the *jocoral*, proffering in vain the domestic gourd, or drinking-cup, and the taller *guacal* depending its giant calabash, or washing-tub, where the voice of the *lavadera* had long been hushed to silence. One lofty *ceiba*, up which entwined the white and red bell-flowers of the creeping *laines* or parasitical vines, stood, like a queen, proud and sorrowful, on the field where her race had fallen. The few other trees, stunted and ugly, seemed to stare desolately at each other ; and upon one protruding leafless branch sat an old monkey, a wandering native of the jungle, a traveler lonely as ourselves. An expression of painful solicitude wrinkled his aged features as he sat, alternately scratching himself, and regarding our movements with ludicrous intensity.

There were no evidences of scoria or volcanic substances, or, if any existed, they had become covered with the loam formed by the accumulation of leaves and the annual washings from above. The steep mountain side before us, up which there appeared no path among the matted thicket, forbade our attempting an ascent to the summit ; but from below there seemed to have been either a sudden and awful land-slide (a conjecture favored by the surface of bare rock down the chasm), or an ancient crater exists at the top. The ashes mentioned in the commonly received narration consisted probably of the dust raised by the crushing to pieces of dried mud houses—adobes.

How Olancho Antigua was destroyed is a matter of conjecture ; but that a thriving and well-located town once existed there is beyond dispute. It is generally believed that much gold lies buried beneath the ruins, but no one is valorous enough to seek it. Oblivion has thrown her mantle over the place, and only exaggerated monkish legends remain to tell of its former existence.

The sun was in the west when we remounted and left the for-



bidding precincts of Olancho Viejo. The nearest hacienda was that of Penuare, to reach which we were obliged to cross the *Rio de Olancho* (named, I presume, after the old city), and to traverse some ten miles of dark woods, with an uncertain path, and the probability of passing the night with the sky for a roof. I now appreciated Victor's prudence in packing the blankets. The river of Olancho, which winds rather romantically around the base of *El Boqueron*, takes its rise toward Manto, and empties into the Guayape half way between Catacamas and Jute-calpa. We forded it without difficulty, and, entering the forest, followed what appeared to be a cattle-path until all light, except from the interstices in the foliage above, was completely shut out.

Here, I imagined, was a fit haunt for the prowling cougar or tiger, and after our arrival at the hacienda we found that cattle had been destroyed in these woods only a week before. Before our return we had ocular demonstration of the reality of the cougar. It was night, when the glimmer of a distant torch and the bark of a dog showed that we had followed the right path.

Penuare is owned by the heirs of Señor Jesus Ordoñez, of Santa Maria del Real, or, in shorter parlance, El Real, the shire town or capital of the municipality of that name. The three brothers resided at the hacienda, and extended the customary welcome to us. I was the first American they had ever seen, and was regarded by them with great interest and curiosity. Here we found the Padre Buenaventura, who had abandoned his idea of reaching El Real, and was yielding to the seductions of a cup of coffee and a *cigarro* as we arrived.

After recounting our adventures at Olancho Viejo, at the mention of which the brothers crossed themselves, we entered our hammock, and only awoke with the screaming of several lusty game-cocks, which, for protection against the little *gatos* of the surrounding woods, were perched at night on a roost erected in one corner for their use.

In the *patio* at Penuare was a curious domesticated wild fowl called *chichilaca*, or chicken-nurse, from the use made of it by the natives in the double capacity of nurse and champion of the chickens. It is said to take better care of the brood than the veritable proprietress herself, who is often removed after having



superintended the arduous process of incubation to make room for the interloping *chichilaca*.

Master Lionel Wafer describes the same bird in 1699 as he saw it at Darien. "It is a stately kind of land-bird, called by the Indians *Chicaly-Chicaly*. Its Noise is somewhat like a Cuckow's, but sharper and quicker. 'Tis a large and long Bird, and has a long Tail, which he carries upright like a Dung-hill Cock. His Feathers are of great variety, of fine, lively colors, red, blue, etc." His description, though written more than a century and a half ago, presents the bird correctly. The *chichilaca* will fight lustily in defense of his charge with hawks or small animals.

The customary *parials* or bee-hives were swinging in the porch of the hacienda. Honey and wax are among the many valuable products of Olancho, and in these two articles the department exceeds any other section of Central America. The hive consists of a log of wood (generally a piece of the limb in which the swarm has located in a wild state). This is hung up with hide thongs under the eaves, and a small hole gives egress and ingress to the occupants. Penuare produces a large amount of honey and wax, which reaches the coast by various routes. The honey is contained in little bags two inches in length, which are ranged in rows along the hive. The cells of comb for the young occupy the centre.

Some idea may be obtained of the extent to which this business might be carried from the fact that there are known in Olancho fourteen distinct species of honey-bee. The names of these are local, and are as follows: *El prieto*, or black bee; *el blanco*, or white bee; *el aluva* (nearly the same); *el jimenito*, *el chichigua* (the sting of which causes an itching like that of the musquito), *el zopilote*, or buzzard bee; *el talnete*, *el suculile*, *el panta*, *el panal*, or hive bee; *el quema*, *el sunteco blanco*, *el sunteco prieto* (different species from the first two above mentioned), and *el joverito*, or *la miris*. This last deposits a small nest of capsules or pills, with a waxy covering like isinglass. These are filled with a delicious fluid, which is used principally for medicinal purposes. Liquid honey is found in nearly every *tienda* in Olancho, and even in Tegucigalpa I paid but ten cents a quart for it. The bees are diminutive, and mostly stingless.

swarms of them may be seen every day, when traveling in the open country, hovering around some decayed tree, and but little trouble is necessary to bear the whole establishment to the nearest hacienda. One of the proprietors said he had sold wax and honey enough since owning the estate to buy all the drilling, *mantos*, and articles of that description required at the hacienda.

We left Penuare early on the following morning, and arrived at El Real at noon. We had letters of introduction to Señor Francisco Meneía, the *alcalde primero*, Señor Marcelino Urbino, and Nazario Vega, the latter the "syndic" of the town. We proceeded, however, directly to the house of the Padre Morillo, an old friend of Padre Buenaventura, where we made ourselves as comfortable as many fleas and a low adobe roof and mud floor would permit.

The town stands not far from the junction of the River Real with the Guayape, which is here a formidable stream, capable of bearing the largest river steamers. I saw no obstructions to navigation in this vicinity. El Real contains some two hundred inhabitants, most of whom are descendants of the Xicaque Indians, mentioned by the Spanish historians as occupying this part of Taguzgalpa at the time of the discovery. The Poyas tribe are probably the most numerous among these. This, as well as the other towns of Olancho, has its church, *cabilda*, and *Plaza*, the whole under the spiritual guidance of the good Padre Morillo. It is the nucleus of a little trade in deer-skins, balsams, sarsaparilla, and hides. Several considerable Indian *hacendados* reside here.

Our host was a mixture of Indian and Spaniard, and a fair representative of the industrious agricultural tribe of Poyas. He was dressed in a pair of cotton drilling drawers and a shirt of like material. We lit our *cigarros*, and commenced exchanging the news. He acquiesced in the general statement that this was a year of great scarcity, and shrugged his shoulders at my hints about the probable political turn of affairs for the ensuing year.

"We have enough to do, señor, with herding our cattle, and preparing for the *rodea* or drive to Guatemala, without meddling much with politics. Here we are out of election strifes,

and hardly care to record our votes. All is quiet with us" (*todo silencio*).

"How many cattle," I asked, "go annually from Olancho to Guatemala?"

"*Quien sabe, señor?* we must send many thousands, however; for, when the great herds start from the vicinity of Jutecalpa, we send up from here and Catacamas every year two thousand head bearing our marks (*farros*), and the Garays, Zelayas, Bustillos, Gardelas, and other rich families, send far more than we. There must be a hundred thousand head a year going into Guatemala, señor."

"A hundred thousand head!" I exclaimed; "why, it seems to me, señor, that you must be mistaken. At how many head do you reckon the entire cattle of Olancho?"

"*Algunos millones, señor.*"

I saw that the old man's statistical information of the present day was scarcely more reliable than the legends of Olancho's Golden Age, and gave up thenceforth noting the numerical estimates of the people.

It is safe, however, to set down the cattle of Olancho alone at above a hundred thousand head, and the annual number driven to San Salvador and Guatemala at not less than two or three thousand. The increase is very great; but, owing to the laziness of the people, hundreds of calves as well as grown cattle are allowed to perish of thirst, or to become mired in wading into the rivers at low stages of water to drink. Skeletons of cattle are found along the banks of the streams, where a few weeks' labor in preparing a road, to which the animals would soon become accustomed, would save large numbers. One of the strangest of sights on the banks of the Guayape is the collapsed and shriveled hides of defunct cattle, hanging like parchment on the framework of bones, and a sedate *zopilote* perched on top, deliberately pluming himself in the sunshine, or croaking himself to sleep in the silent moonlit night. The losses of the Bustillos family alone by ignorance and laziness amount to several hundred dollars annually.

The indolent habits of the *Olanchano* have passed into a proverb in Honduras. Imagine a native reclining in a hammock attached to the rafters of the hut, through the chinks of





SKELETON CATTLE.

which percolate the cooling gales of these paradisiacal regions. From above, and within reach, depends a luscious bunch of plantains or bananas. He swings leisurely to and fro, watching the curls of his *cigarro* wreathing in fantastic figures between his vision and the blue mountain peaks that form the green valley of his birth-place. To all the great issues and sounding events of the noisy world beyond and abroad, he has remained all his life in blissful ignorance. When appetite demands, he detaches a plantain, transfixes it upon a long stick, and, leaning out of his luxurious nest, deliberately toasts it at the embers smouldering near the door. This simple operation completed to his taste, Don Fulano hauls the fruit into the hammock, and discusses it stretched at full length in his swinging eyrie!

This description was given me *verbatim*, nearly as above, by a friend in Tegucigalpa, as an illustration of the lazy habits of the *Olanchanos*. "As lazy as an *Olanchano*," and "*Que*





PLOWING.

*Olanchano!*" when reproving an indolent servant, are current phrases in Honduras. But, as I have said, the care of their cattle haciendas preserves a sort of pastoral activity, and the people, on the whole, are rather inclined to industrial pursuits.

At El Real I got a second touch of *la calentura*, from which the lower plains in this vicinity are not exempt. The symptoms have already been described in the pages relating to Tigre

Island. My servant Victor stood guard for two days, defending me from the assaults of several old *curadoras*, or female doctors, who insisted upon my adopting their prescriptions, notwithstanding my inevitable reputation as a *medico grande*.

One of the remedies for fevers and liver complaints in Olancho is of so remarkable a kind, that its description here will be read as a curious entomological fact. This consists of a drink made from the juice of the sugar-cane, mixed with a powder obtained from the dust of burnt insects, and known as *la higadera*, owing to its particular applicability to liver complaints. The little animal that contributes with its life to this beverage is represented to be the descendant of a species of grasshopper, which, from the several natural changes it undergoes, is called *el Variable*. In the spring of the year, this insect, after a short-lived visit above ground, buries itself to the depth of several inches in the earth, where it dies, after depositing a number of eggs in a cocoon. On the bursting of this, several winged creatures appear, who, in turn, leave a vast quantity of eggs, like those of the ant, under the bark of trees. From these shortly issue countless small white insects, which are gathered by the natives and roasted alive for the above purposes. Of the next change in the eventful life of the *higadera*, I could get

no definite description. The drink I tasted at El Real, and found it rather palatable.

A few doses of quinine enabled me to issue again into the sunlight and air, and to use water for washing, which all my threats of future vengeance could not induce my faithful Victor to bring me. The two padres had prohibited him from allowing me to commit suicide by touching cold water to my face while sick!

El Real has its legends relating to the days when gold was so plenty in Olancho that not to have a quantity stored away was an exception to the rule. These, however, are but uninteresting variations on those already alluded to.

The Padre Morillo also referred to the time within his memory when the Mosquito king came up the Patook, with several Englishmen, and attempted to assert his authority in all the towns along the Guayape, including Jutecalpa. The protectorate at that time (1847) was claimed by Great Britain as embracing the whole of Olancho, and two thirds of Nicaragua and Costa Rica! Among those who then had it in view to establish an English colony at the junction of the Guayape and Guayambre was a Mr. B——, who at the time figured extensively in Jutecalpa, to the scandal of the Garays and Zelayas.

The padre, who was an eye-witness, related that two of these worthies were staying in Jutecalpa in 1847. One of them laid siege to the hand of the Señorita Teresa, daughter of Señor Garay, under the impression that the old man's speedy death would leave him master of family property which should then be divided between the two. The suit was successful. One evening, under the inspiring influence of *aguardiente*, the lover plumed himself in audible English on his luck, and allowed certain dishonorable plans with regard to the bride's dower to escape, which, unfortunately for him, were overheard by a Jamaica negro, who had suffered from the brutality of Mr. ———. The negro divulged the whole scheme to the girl, who discarded the perfidious suitor. An attack was made that night by the two adventurers upon the house of old Señor Garay. Following the plan of the buccaneers, they defied the town half the night, armed with pistols and swords. To injure an Englishman at that time, whether in the right or wrong, under the famous

policy of Mr. Chatfield, was equivalent to subjecting any seaport to bombardment by an English fleet; and though the people were greatly exasperated, they were restrained from killing or wounding the brawlers.

About midnight the commandante militar, Don Francisco Zelaya, arrived in town from one of his haciendas. Hearing of the disturbance, he rode to the spot, and without hesitation dismounted, and disarmed the blustering couple in the face of their threats and weapons, and placed them in the *cuartel* until morning. The next day they were dismissed from the town, and the pretty *Niña* Teresa was married a few months afterward to a gentleman of Tegucigalpa, where she is yet one of the most attractive ladies. The marks of the swords of the assailants are yet visible on the window-shutters of Señor Garay's house. This event created great excitement in Jutecalpa, and had its weight in breaking up the negotiations for an English colony at the plain of Las Flores.

Our three days' visit at El Real was quite sufficient to develop its lions, one of which was an enormous alligator from the Guayape, which was shot by a native while in the act of forcibly abducting an adventurous pig from the bank where he was rooting. These creatures—called *lagatos* in Olancho—abound in the Guayape, from this point down to the ocean. In the Lake of Mescales, south of Catacamas, they are also found, and the swamps, or *lienegas*, in that vicinity are said to be alive with them. The one at El Real is the only alligator I saw in Honduras.

I was not sorry, on the morning of the fourth day, after a cup of coffee and the sleepy adios of my friends, to mount and canter out of wretched, dirty El Real. The Padre Buenaventura had accompanied me on the trip partly to attend to some business matters there, and preferred to remain a day or two longer. I was fearful of prolonging my journey beyond the time I had proposed to meet General Zelaya at Lepaguare, and resolved to start for Catacamas at once.

The route lies nearly east, and leads over two or three successive ranges of high hills—almost mountains—the names of which I neglected to note. We set out before dawn, in order to pass the extensive plain bordering the Guayape, on the opposite side of the mountains, before the heat of midday, which

here beats down with an intensity almost equaling that of the coast itself. Half an hour's gallop through the silent glades brought us to the foot-hills of the range, up which we proceeded at a rapid walk for the purpose of witnessing the sunrise, which promised to be a brilliant one, from the summit.

The sun was just gilding the eastern horizon as we reached the plateau toward which we had struggled for nearly an hour. The view was an ocean of woods—a vast plain intersected with regular ranges—among which twined the Guayape and its tributaries like silver threads. A speck of glittering cloud hung over the rim of the mountains, but in a moment melted away, as "day on the mountains broke over the landscape."

The sky was so clear that the eye almost ached in searching the blue vault for a cloud to relieve the monotony. A cool air, fresh from the slopes of Santa Cruz del Oro, gently rustled the leaves near us; but beyond, all was motionless and silent. I dismounted, and from a rock gazed off toward the rich lights fast climbing above the hills, until the sun came up, and produced the magical effect which every tropical traveler will recall, tinting the mountains with a splendor no artist can imitate, and imparting a lifelike tone to the sea of green.

Before us lay a ravine, into which a small stream emptied its gurgling treasures, pouring through the self-worn lip of a natural water-vase. A venerable beard of green and gray moss depended from below, dripping with the pure element, and wagging with the motion of the torrent so as to convey the idea of a jolly old Bacchanalian indulging in a burst of hilarious humor, except that the pure element he spurted from his mouth scouted the simile.

The view was so extensive and enchanting that I had quite lost myself in its contemplation, and was wondering whether these great savannas would ever be peopled, when Victor uttered an exclamation, and pointed to the form of some beast of prey sitting on a high ridge near by, and who, as if unconscious of the intruders on his domain, was, like ourselves, gazing off toward the eastward, and perhaps cogitating upon the chances for a morning meal.

I leveled my rifle, but Victor, in evident alarm, urged me not to fire—a piece of advice I afterward congratulated myself upon



having followed. He pronounced it the jaguar, or lion of Honduras; and, hastily gathering up his blanket, retreated down the opposite slope, where the horses were quietly grazing. Victor's alarm was contagious, and I was preparing to follow him, when the beast, after lapping his velvety coat a moment, arose to his feet, and, turning toward us, walked to within twenty yards of where we stood, and with ears cocked, and tail nervously playing around his haunches, honored us with an extremely aristocratic stare.

"*Caramba!*" muttered Victor, "it is the jaguar, in good faith; he is taking an early walk; and see! he walks this way again!" The animal, observing our retreat toward the horses, was now moving leisurely after us, and at so small a distance that his displeasure at our presence was plainly manifested by an occasional wrinkling of his lip, and the display of a muscular system that quite satisfied my curiosity on such points.

Victor put both hands to his mouth and uttered a yell, causing the animal for a moment to pause and examine us more attentively. This interval we employed in reaching and mounting our horses, who were now staring at the jaguar with dilated nostrils and ears erect. Our new acquaintance uttered a loud sound between a snarl and a roar, and, either disliking the glitter of my rifle, or influenced by that mysterious instinct which sometimes deters the brute creation from an assault on man, walked slowly away, and disappeared into a thicket skirting the adjoining hill.

The jaguar is naturally a coward, and is seldom seen except in unfrequented places, whence he makes nocturnal descents upon the haciendas to the certain detriment of the cattle-owners. Half a dozen bullets are not always enough to finish him.

One of these animals was killed, a few years since, near the hacienda of Uloa, with the reputation of having slaughtered a hundred cattle in his lifetime. His skin was suspended in the *sala* of Señor Garay, who presented it to me on leaving Olancho. This, with many other specimens, was stolen from my pack-saddle in Nicaragua.

Victor attributed the fortunate issue of this adventure to his invocation of his patron saint and the Virgin, who, he said, never permitted the jaguar to destroy *Christianos* or good Catholics.



INDIAN LABORERS.

The animal is provided with an array of most formidable claws, used with wonderful quickness and force. The supple bound of the jaguar is what constitutes the terrific power of his assault. Like the leopard, he fastens himself with a desperate leap upon the back of his victim, and one spring will break the spine of a cow. Dunn thinks there is little doubt but that the tiger and jaguar, bearing a strong resemblance to the ounce, are the same animal in Central America. He is, however, greatly mistaken in this opinion. The ounce is

a much smaller animal. The *tiger* of Central America, as is asserted by Byam, who lived two years in the wildest forests of that country, is the panther, and the *jaguar* is the puma, or South and Central American lion. Captain Henderson divides the ferine animals of Honduras into the *felis onca*, or Brazilian tiger, and the *felis discolor*, or black tiger. Mr. Squier describes the black tiger, jaguar (*felis onca*), cougar or puma, and ocelot, as four distinct animals. These, I believe, are the only two authorities making any mention of the black tiger as an inhabitant of Honduras. "No animal," continues Byam, "springs more quickly, and no wild beast attacks men more audaciously than the panther or tiger, but he is free from the peculiarity or vice that distinguishes the puma-lion, and that is, that he never follows or dodges the footsteps of man." He frequents the loneliest mountains and the jungles of the Pacific coast. Honduras is full of thrilling stories of "*el tigre*."

The jaguar, or puma, is a sneaky fellow, equally feline in his habits, but less courageous than the tiger. Traveling through

the lonely passes, the voice of this midnight prowler comes with startling distinctness, and admonishes the belated traveler to seek the habitations of men. I know of no sound but the howl of the red monkey, or red-bearded ape, as he is sometimes called, that has such a melancholy effect on the mind as the shrill, prolonged cry of the jaguar. The track of this animal may be known by a little mound of sand or earth behind where the ball of the foot has been placed. He is smaller than the panther, and not so bold, but follows the trail of man at sunset, and instances are recorded of persons being destroyed by them in the forest. Byam describes the jaguar's cry as "what a person might conceive to issue from an enormously overgrown tom-cat with several extra pairs of lungs."

A variety of tiger-cats, some of them beautifully diversified with stripes and spots, abound in Olancho. The writer above quoted describes one that he killed in Segovia as having the belly and ground of pale yellow; the back almost black, with a succession of black spots in irregular shapes from the back to the belly, but the spots diminishing beautifully and regularly as they approached the stomach. This cat was about the size of a pointer dog.

Coyotes and small wolves are common, and are indefatigable hunters of the deer. At times, in droves, they even assail the tiger by driving him into a tree, and regularly besieging him until, hunger compelling the larger beast to leap to the ground, he is torn into pieces after destroying a number of his enemies.

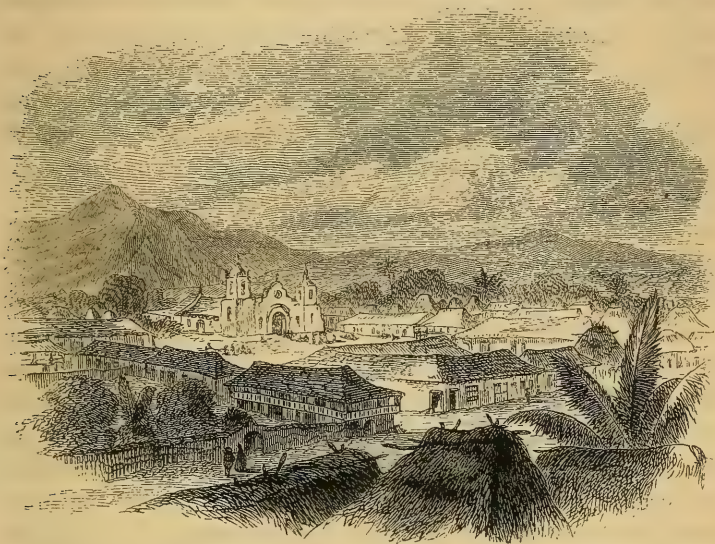
From the tiger to the squirrel, there is no lack of game in Olancho; and amid such a variety, young America, in future generations, will find ample employment for his rifle, and tiger-hunts in Olancho may yet be the theme for the contributor to some tropical *Knickerbocker* or *Spirit of the Times*.

From this adventure with the puma or jaguar, we pursued our trip along the ridge of the hill, and, commencing the descent, reached the plain, and followed a well-beaten track for the rest of the way.

The Indian town of Catacamas contains about two thousand inhabitants, and stands on the eastern bank of the river of that name, and not far from its junction with the Guayape. It contains a church, almost a fac simile of that of Jutecalpa, and a



regular municipality government, of which a venerable Indian, Señor Vicente Sanchez, is *alcalde primero*. The houses are mostly tiled, and numbers of them are substantially built. Its population consists mainly of converted or civilized Indians, who have from time immemorial enjoyed a local reputation as industrious, frugal citizens. Occupying a part of one side of the Plaza stood the little *cuartel*, with one four-pounder can-



INDIAN TOWN OF CATACAMAS.

non and a forlorn-looking sentinel. Some twelve soldiers, under command of Captain Pedro Muñoz, constituted the garrison. I bore a letter of introduction from Padre Buenaventura to Señor Vicente Salgado, one of the *rejidores* of the town, who received me in his house near the Plaza with the usual hospitality. This is the last settlement toward the mouth of the Patook River. The villages of Dulcenombre (sweet name), Rio Tinto, and La Conquista are mere hamlets, like those already described.

The house of Señor Salgado, which was the largest in the town, had been lately tiled, and was now being carefully whitewashed. We rode into a paved *patio*, and, dismounting, we were received by a sedate Indian woman, the wife of the *rejidor*, who offered me a repast of cheese and chocolate, and ordered the passive



Victor about with all the volubility of a Northern housewife. The evening was passed in discussing the topics of the day with my host, who was a fair specimen of a nearly pure-blooded Indian. He laughed heartily at the cougar adventure, and said that with a large stone or club I might easily have put the animal to flight, a process which, as I observed to him, I should prefer leaving to others to perform. The old man offered me a bed of polished hide whereon to spread my *maleta*, and, with a "*pasa buena la noche*" and a low obeisance, left me to my rest.

At daylight we took a stroll about the town, which is considered by the Indians as superior in all respects to Jutecalpa. I was certainly unprepared for a scene of so much prosperity. In the market were displayed a variety of vegetables and fruits, and all the trades necessary to the support of the people were actively conducted.

Here and there appeared one of the less civilized members of the tribes who pass their time on the great river below, fishing or navigating the frail *pipantes* to the Caribbean Sea. A number of diverging paths lead to the Guayape, striking it at several points, known as *embarcaderos*, or landing-places. Small plantations of yuca, maize, tobacco, rice, plantains, and beans are scattered in profusion for several miles around the town, which forms the centre of a considerable traffic.

There are perhaps six thousand inhabitants in a circle of twenty miles around Catacamas, who obtain most of their foreign goods through Jutecalpa, but are now establishing an increasing trade with the sea *via* the Patook. There are but few descendants of the Spaniards living here. The authorities are mostly Indians, asserting and apparently maintaining a quiet superintendence of affairs, partly after the primitive forms of the less civilized tribes, but really based on the municipality rules of the department. The people embraced Christianity many years since, and have found time to decorate the interior of their little church with rude pictures and wooden images of saints.

A more peaceable and hospitable race it would be difficult to imagine. The rumor that an *Americano del Norte* was in town induced a number of the most inquisitive to enter the house,

where I passed several hours swinging in the network hammock, smoking *cigarros*, and chatting with the simple natives. Not one had the remotest idea of the United States, except that it was "*el Norte*," and the people "*muy bravo*." My rifle excited great curiosity, and some shots at a target at their request elicited shouts of approval, though the marksmanship was not of the best. Very few had ever before seen "an American."

At night the Padre Buenaventura arrived from El Real, having concluded his business sooner than he expected. He brought me a letter from L——, who had remained at Jutecalpa, giving me the particulars of a revolution in Yoro, and an invasion of Honduras by the Guatemalans under Guardiola. The exaggerated rumors induced me to resign the proposed visit to the confluence of the Guayape and Guayambre.

On the following morning we rode to the river. A few hours' canter over a heavily-wooded plain brought us to the noble stream, which there follows the bend of a range of mountains on the northern side. The Guayape, now augmented by the waters of the Jalan and several other tributaries above, rolled along to the sea with the quiet majesty of a deep, navigable river. Among the dense foliage of an island which here divides it into two channels were perched a multitude of parrots, holding noisy council, and not a whit disturbed by our sudden emergence from the shrubbery on the bank. I gave a loud halloo, when the whole flock took flight, screaming angrily at the interruption, and several macaws added their harsh voices to the confusion. The parrots soon flitted past them in the general flight, leaving these splendid creatures streaming along by themselves, and looking like comets against the azure sky.

The local name of the macaw in Honduras is the *juacamalla*, or *huacamaya*; in Nicaragua it is the *lapa*. The bird does not differ from the Mexican macaw except in having a smaller and more pointed beak. Its colors are splendid, and beautifully distributed: the breast, head, and back are of a deep glossy red; the wings yellow, blue, and green; the tail is composed of eleven blue and red quills, six of which are stout and short, the remaining five frail but broad, and, when full grown, fourteen inches in length. In flying, these are gathered close together. A grand convention of macaws, which may sometimes be wit-

nessed in the woods, imparts a singular appearance to the foliage of the great *guanacaste*, in whose branches they usually hold their meetings. They keep up an incessant screaming, scrambling about, hanging by the claws, or swinging by the hooked beak, till the tree seems hung with gaudy banners as on a gala-day. Toward the coast the beautiful green species is said to exist, much more elegant than his rainbow cousin; but both of these pale before the superb blue macaw, one of the rarest birds of the country. I heard of some domesticated in the town of Manto, but could never get sight of one. They are said to avoid the other members of the macaw family, and affect the vicinity of the Lean coast, between Truxillo and Omoa.

From the different species of the macaw, the superb *quetzel* (a bird of the extremest rarity), the verderon, the pavon real (or royal peacock), the papagayo, urraca, pajaró colorado, ruiseñor, oripendole (or pendulum-bird), and numerous others, among which should be mentioned a great variety of the humming-bird, the Indians of Olancho, especially the Poyas tribe, manufacture articles of feather dress, such as caps, mantles, belts, and wreaths for the shoulders and neck, besides adorning with them their quivers and other articles of the skins of animals. The only specimen of this work I could obtain was that procured from an Indian at Jutecalpa during the *funcion*. In olden times these articles were brought to Jutecalpa for sale, but of late the custom has been discontinued.

The Guayape, at the bend where we stood, presented the appearance of having no rocks in its bed. The bottom, as far in as we could see, was of sand entirely. Several large logs and branches of trees had collected near by, just tilting, and balanced by their own weight against the force of the current. Padre Buenaventura pushed them out with his foot, when the whole mass turned slowly into the current, and floated down the river. The still places here are filled with excellent fish. The scene was one of wild solitude and sadness. From the mountain tops to the shady depths of the woods around, we heard no sound but the splash of the river, or the distant cry of birds on the opposite bank. A few hundred yards above us were a bevy of wood-ducks, hugging the shore and stemming the current to keep at a safe distance from our party. Several sad-

looking spoon-bills (*Platalea Ajaja*), and blue and white heron, stood silently contemplating the water, at times emitting a single harsh cry, as if angry at our unwonted intrusion. An eddy, circling in the deep current for a moment, showed where some huge catfish or alligator explored his way up stream.

I gazed until the lengthening shadows admonished us to start. We returned by a road leading through the beautiful valley of Santa Clara, almost the counterpart of those before referred to, toward Lepaguare. Its carpet of green was now a dusky horizon, with the forms of cattle just discernible against the fading light of the west.

The disturbed state of affairs in Tegucigalpa hastened our departure from Catacamas. I had time, however, to make an excursion toward the sources of a small *arroyo* emptying into the Rio de Catacamas, where I got a few shots at deer, wounding one, and packing home the hind quarters of another. The method of shooting deer in this section of Olancho is by "stalking" them with a trained ox. The huntsman walks toward the herd on the *off side* of the ox, and thus approaches the animals to within shooting distance. On the road back to Catacamas, as we turned a sudden angle in the path, I found the way disputed by a flock of large, heavy birds, somewhat resembling wild turkeys, for which I at first mistook them. They arose, and flew slowly away as we came close upon them, and, but for an imperfect cap, I should have added some part of their plumage to my collection. These are called by the natives *quebrante-huesos* (or break-bones), from the great strength of their wings, which, like those of the swan, are said to have force enough to break a man's arm. They are possibly a specimen of sand-hill crane, common to Eastern Texas.

On this trip, too, I observed for the first time a vegetable ivory-tree, which, however, grows all over Olancho. The fruit of the tree is a rough mass or bunch of a very hard substance, covered with hundreds of pointed pyramids, from among which the nuts of vegetable ivory bulge out like plums in a pudding. These nuts are of the color and consistency of ivory. I never heard of their being gathered in Honduras.

Half a mile outside the town I was stopped by a boy, who issued from a cane hut, and ran at full speed after me, with the



request that, in the name of "*Dios*," I would turn back and cure his mother. I had now quite exhausted my little stock of medicines, but, knowing the pertinacity of such applicants, I returned at once and dismounted. The woman was in the agonies of death as I entered, and so far gone that the breath passed from her body a few minutes after. I shall not soon forget the frantic gestures and beseeching look of the little fellow who had called me back; and when it was evident that even the "*Americano del Norte*" could not save her, he rushed screaming by the padre, and ran into the *platinal* near by, where his cries and sobs were really piteous. It was useless to attempt to console him.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

The *Platinal*.—Plantains: their Cultivation.—Ancient Ideas respecting.—The Route home.—*Pita*.—Deer-skins.—Burning the *Bolpochi*.—Description of venomous Snakes.—Antidotes.—After the Ceremonies.—A nocturnal Prowler.—Peruvian Bark.—Rice.—The Olancho Air-gun.—Tobacco.—Return to Jutecalpa.—Gold Stories.—Musical Reunion.—Commissions.—The Departure.—Lepaguare again.—A Visit to the *Espumoso*.—Mining Adventures.—Making a Contract.—"Kissing the Widow."—Cold Weather.—Hail.—Jotejiagua.—The Gold of *El Panal*.—*El Retiro*.—Gold at Alajagua.—Rio de España.—A novel Method of Fishing.—Jutecalpa again.—Bad News.—Musty Documents.—Early Settlers.—A Morning Ride.—Good-by to Olancho.

ONE of the most beautiful trees in the valleys of Olancho, and indeed of all Central America, is the *platinal*, or plantain grove, which adorns every plantation. The plantain-tree, like the palm, is a feature of the country. It forms an impervious and protecting hedge around every estate. Its ample leaves wave and nod in the breeze along the *camino real* in many parts of the country. In the lowlands of Nicaragua and Salvador it grows with a luxuriance delightful to behold, and far in the arid peaks of the sierras of Honduras, thousands of feet above the sea, may be found the little *platinal*, nestling, green and flourishing, in some *vallecito*, with the rude hut of the mountain laborer peeping forth from among the leaves. At Amapala, the waves of the Pacific washed around the very roots of the trees, loaded with the golden fruit; and far down the rolling waters of the lonely Patook and Tinto, these trees were found amid the wildest solitudes, where the seeds, borne by the current toward the Carib-

bean from the interior of Honduras, have lodged in the rich alluvium, annually dropping their fruits into the rivers.

An old botanical writer asserts it to be a native of the East Indies and other parts of the Asiatic continent, and probably of Africa. It was originally transported to the West Indies from the Canary Islands, to which, it is believed, it was carried many centuries ago from Guinea. It seems to have migrated with mankind from Asia into the numerous islands of the South Pacific Ocean, where, as in Central America, it has degenerated into several varieties. It was not known in America before the arrival of the Spaniards.

It is cultivated with very little care. It attains its greatest perfection in a moist, rich soil, and in large plantations is set out in regular walks, or rows, about eight feet apart. It is reproduced by shoots, which arrive at maturity and bear fruit shortly after the first year. But, as the original root sends up new shoots each year, a sufficient space is left for the increase. The stem gradually decays from the period of the ripening of the fruit, when the young shoots commence to put forth. Thus the plantain goes on producing to infinity: the flower, the half-formed, and the clusters of fully-ripe fruit, bursting with its imprisoned luxuries, all mingling with the rich green foliage, to which their gay hues stand in a beauteous contrast. There is no such thing as the season of them; it is a perpetual harvest, the tempting clusters bending themselves down within reach of the gatherer every week in the year.

In olden times there was much mystery attached to the plantain, many intelligent persons in Europe being in utter ignorance of it. Until within the present century, when the means of travel have become such as to place the most secluded countries within shaking-hands' distance, very little was known of this, or many other tropical fruits, except through the medium of narratives of the old voyagers.

In 1633, a bunch of plantains was sent from Bermuda to Dr. Argent, president of the College of Physicians in London. He hung it, "with the fruit thereon, in his shop, where it became ripe about the beginning of May, and lasted until June. The pulp was very soft and tender, and it did eat somewhat like a muskmelon." Gerarde and some other old authors name it Adam's

apple-tree, under the impression that it was the forbidden fruit of Eden. Others supposed it to be the grapes brought out of the promised land to Moses. This latter idea carries with it some plausibility; a bunch of ripe plantains, or bananas, is a splendid representation of a gigantic cluster of grapes, requiring two men to carry it slung to a pole. Dampier, the old voyager, calls it "the king of all fruit." He says, "The inclosed fruit is no harder than butter is in winter, and much of the color. It is of a delicate taste, and melts in one's mouth like marmalade!" Plantains and bananas have never been articles of export, only enough being cultivated to supply the wants of the country. From a hill in the neighborhood of Catacamas, hundreds of small *platinals* may be noted, requiring little or no labor for their maintainance.

My limited stay at Catacamas enabled me to collect but few valuable facts, verbal and documentary. Excepting the dusky faces of the Indian inhabitants, and a trifle less comfort and show in the method of living, there is but slight difference between the town and Jutecalpa. We started homeward, as usual, at early dawn, and reached El Real at noon, cantering our beasts smartly nearly the whole route.

On the way we dismounted to examine the plant from which the *jenican* or *pita* is obtained for the manufacture of the grass hammocks common throughout the tropics. The plant is probably the *sosquil*, from which the Sisal hemp is made. It is a cactus, not unlike the *maguay* or agave of Mexico, yielding the *pulque* of that country. It is not the same plant, however, bearing no *pulque* blossom, and only resembling it in the great height of its leaves, which come to a lance point, and are filled with an easily-flowing juice. The *pita* grows wild in all directions; from it is made the rope of the country, cordage for boats, *macates*, thread for shoemaking purposes, all horse-gear, *lazos*, and the universal hammock. The leaves are cut close to the root, then laid upon a flat stone, and curried with a bit of wood shaped somewhat like the common rolling-pin. The pulpy matter being thus expressed or rubbed out of the fibres, they are dried in shreds, called *pita*, and ready for manufacture. The rubbing process is not continued after sunrise, owing to the effect of the sun upon the plant, its dust acting upon the skin like cowhage.

As we entered El Real, a hunter, with a mule-load of deer-skins, joined us from a by-path leading toward the mountains. These are worth from 10 to 12½ cents each, and are one of the articles of export from this section. Instead, however, of being sent down the Guayape, the most direct route to the sea, they are carried on mules to Truxillo, or oftener to Jutecalpa, whence mule-trains go annually laden with them to the coasts.

Crossing the little Plaza, I noticed a number of boys heaping up a quantity of fagots, as preparing for a bonfire. One of them, who stopped to talk with Victor, answered to his inquiries that a bolpochi or tamagasa was to be burnt at night. The tamagasa, I soon learned, was one of the deadliest snakes in the country, and an object of special vengeance whenever safely captured. In this ritual I recognized a continuance of the idolatrous customs attributed to these Indians by the Spanish historians, and from which their conversion to Catholicism has not entirely weaned them.

About eight o'clock a tremendous racket from the outskirts of the place set the whole population into a race to the spot, and, joining the movement, I came in view of a procession of ten or fifteen boys and old women, chanting an aboriginal jargon, which, with the fantastic dresses donned for the occasion, and an occasional harridan's dance and look, brought to mind some horrid incantation scene of tragic muse. The word "*bolpochi*," another name for the tamagasa, was at times recognizable. The snake, whose bite is believed to be more deadly than that of the dreaded corral or saikan, is found in this section of country. The *mordido de bolpochi* (or bolpochi-bitten) is instantly thrown upon his back, and copious drafts of aguardiente or other stimulant turned down his throat to preserve life until the padre can be sent for, who leaves all other occupations, day or night, to hasten to the scene, for the inexorable poison leaves the victim but a few minutes for shriving.

The body is represented as quickly swelling, and, as discoloration spreads, the affected parts grow gradually rigid. The sufferer becomes insensible, and expires a hideous spectacle. No remedy, not even the *cedron* or the *guaco*, both supposed to be infallible remedies for the poison of venomous reptiles, avails in these cases to avert certain death.



Such was the account given me by Señor Meneía, who had, with bare feet and *baton* of office, deigned to accompany me to the Plaza to observe the progress of the ceremony.

The bonfire before alluded to had just been lighted, at which the bolpochi was to be roasted alive! and a fit subject for such treatment he appeared. Part of the procession consisted of a pole borne on the shoulders of two boys, in the middle of which, slung firmly by the tail, with his mouth *sewed up* to prevent his snapping his horrid jaws, hung the redoubtable snake. He was not far from three feet in length, about three inches around the largest part, and of a dark, spotted yellow hue. What with the excited gestures of the natives, the appalling accounts of the creature's venomous qualities, and the angry writhings and lashings of the bolpochi himself, I was already imbued with a wholesome dread of the snake, equal to that of the *Olanchanos*.

Padre Morillo approached, and, after pronouncing a scathing malediction, cursing his snakeship in the name of the Virgin and all the saints in the calendar, the object of general wrath was thrust into the flames, and if any poison yet remained it was put to the test of such heat as only a salamander could stand.

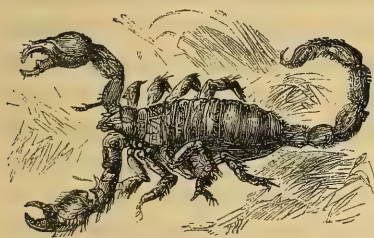
Two natives had captured the snake; one threw his *poncho* over him while basking in the sun, and the other confined his head to the earth with a crotched stick until his mouth was sewed up. They received the blessing of the padre, and, after the firing ordeal, a collection was taken up for them. I secured the eternal friendship of the padre by casting a dollar in silver reals into the basin. I suspected, with reason, that his worship retained, by private agreement with the Indians, a considerable portion.

One of these fellows, I was told, had signalized himself by catching and killing bolpochis, saikans, tigers, and other "varmints," and stood in the same relation to Olancho that Saint Patrick did to the Emerald Isle. The bolpochi is known in Yucatan, where he haunts the aboriginal ruins. The "barber's pole," mentioned by Henderson as among the venomous snakes of Balize, is probably the corral, bearing a local name.

Of the corral, Byam says that, should a man be bitten, he falls immediately, his blood curdles into a thick, coagulated

state, when he dies and becomes putrid in a short time. The corral is copper-red, with rings of yellow, white, or black around the body. He is differently formed from most snakes, and is often seen three feet in length. The tamagasa or tommy-goff is scarcely less terrible. He is known by a vicious flat head, and sports an unsightly bunch on the back of his neck. The saikan has been supposed to be the corral under an Indian name: this, however, is a distinct snake, whose bite is often fatal. The taboba is another venomous snake, thought by many to be even worse than any of the above-mentioned. Its bite is absolute death. It is as common to Nicaragua as to Honduras. I have in my notes five well-authenticated stories of sudden death occurring from the bite of this creature. It is but eighteen inches long, but thick for its length, of a dark shiny brown, and very malicious. It has a large head, and makes a sound like the chirping of a cricket: this is the signal for all within hearing to rush from the spot. The taboba is said to be very sluggish, and almost torpid during the day, and is reckoned a great sneak, as he only crawls between sunset and sunrise, and then at a pace to make up for his temporary inactivity. A finger bitten in the field or forest is instantly chopped off by the companions of the sufferer.

With such an appalling list of deadly snakes, to say nothing of the tamaulipas, tarantula, scorpion, and centipede, it would



THE SCORPION.

be inferred that Olancho is a universal nest for venomous reptiles; yet, though these all exist, as in most intertropical countries, they are not found in such numbers as to be dangerous. The boa, and other large but harmless serpents are known to exist, but

my knowledge of them was confined to one seen at Santa Ursula in Nicaragua.

So much space devoted to poisonous snakes merits to be terminated with a description of the best-known antidote, which I became familiar with, in the shape of a parasitical vine or creeper, clinging with delicate tendrils to its supporter. Thompson (p.

66) refers to the astonishing antidotal powers of the *guaco*. It proves, he says, a speedy cure for poison from snakes whose bite insures death in twenty minutes. The sufferer bites a small piece from the *guaco*, of which the root or branches are equally efficacious, and applies the saliva to the wound, and also swallows the saliva arising from mastication for a few hours, when all deleterious effects disappear. Birds known to feast on reptiles and snakes, and animals that have been bitten by them, are said to apply for relief to the *guaco* vine. The cedron is a more recent discovery. It is a nut, cutting like soft pine, and said to be equal to the *guaco*. The seeds of the snake okro, or vegetable musk, made into a paste and applied as a poultice, or taken inwardly, and the plant known as the *eryngo*, are also known to be efficacious as antidotes to the bites of reptiles.

I am afraid that the Padres Buenaventura and Morillo were not always shining examples to their little flocks; at least, on the bolpochi-night at El Real they laid themselves open to such a suspicion. A large jar of aguardiente got into the house after the ceremonies, more than probably purchased with the contribution money, and it was quite peep of dawn when the two holy men retired to rest, which they did in apparent disregard to comfort, coiled up in most unclerical plight in a corner of the adobe. About noon they arose and ate in silence a pyramid of tortillas placed between them by a bedraggled Indian girl.

After this late breakfast, Victor and the padre's boy saddled the animals, and we set out toward Penuare. As we issued from the town we overtook an Indian, who, of course, in the name of the "*Santissimo Sacramento del Altar*," begged alms of us. The padre held back my hand as I was about proffering a small coin, and himself gave the fellow some change, saying, "*Hijo, aquí van dos reales*." The Indian shut his fingers over the gift and pursued his way. We were struggling up a deep *cuesta*, when we were again saluted from afar with boisterous shouts from our Indian friend. Almost breathless, he rushed up to the padre with, "Oh! Señor Padre, it was only a real you gave me." "Let me see," placidly replied the padre, counting the change, and quietly restoring it to his pocket, with the remark, "*Hijo, á caballo regalado, no hai que mirarle el diente*." (My son, never look a gift-horse in the mouth!)

The surprise depicted in the applicant's face can be imagined, but it immediately relapsed into the taciturn expression distinguishing the Indian race.

We reached the hacienda after rather an unsocial ride, the padre appearing to cogitate, with a depressed air, over the previous night's hilarity. On our arrival he dismounted, took a cup of coffee, smoked a *cigarro*, and dropped to sleep again. Early next morning he awoke, cheery as a lark, and more than ever talkative from his late taciturnity. We continued our journey to La Herradura, where we arrived at nightfall.

Here we were again welcomed by Señor Meza and the Niña Benita, and, after a comfortable chat and smoke, retired for the night, with the view of an early start for Telica in the morning. About midnight a tremendous uproar in the adobe hen-roost aroused us, and Don Ignacio, with his two Indians, rushed with lighted torches to the scene of confusion, whence he commenced a lusty shouting, answered at intervals by the screams of the Niña Benita, who sat up like a ghost in her bed. The night was cold, and the delay of finding my *serape* and rifle just allowed me to catch a glimpse of a beast of prey leisurely galloping up a neighboring slope with a rooster in his mouth. It was an ocelot or mountain-cat, who had scratched his way under the hut. A rifle-shot did nothing toward stopping him, and he soon disappeared from sight. As Don Ignacio removed the remaining fowls into the house, he said this was the third visit this animal had paid him, and that, in scrambling through the hole, he had dealt him two tremendous thwacks over the back, which accounted for his slow gait in escaping.

In the morning we started again for Telica, and, passing through San Roque, with scarcely a halt to rest our horses, arrived at the village in time to assist the Padre Fiallos at his evening meal. A child at the door was blowing arrows through a hollow reed, which I then ascertained was a common instrument for the capture of birds by the Indians, a custom handed down by the aborigines. The reed, which is usually about four feet long, is polished inside by a peculiar process. It is charged with a poisoned arrow, insuring instant death to the wounded bird.

At Telica was a small field of rice, which throughout Olancho



grows without submerging or irrigation of any kind. There exists scarcely any machinery for its preparation; yet, with the rude manner of its cultivation, it forms one of the principal articles of food. The grains are white and small, and, I should think, of the best quality. Rice is claimed to have been first introduced and cultivated in Olancho by Señor Garay in 1829. A species of Peruvian bark (*copalchi*) is also abundant in all directions, and in Jutecalpa, where it is known as "*quina*," it is chewed for its supposed virtues as a febrifuge. This is probably the same drug exported from other tropical countries under the name of "*kino*," and manufactured into sulphate of quinine.

Tobacco is cultivated at Telica as well as at most of the principal haciendas in Olancho. Enough only is raised to supply the home demand, its consumption being confined to paper-cigar smoking. It is indigenous to Central America, and grows in some places almost to rival the cultivated plant. The *tobacco silvestre*, gathered by the Indians beyond Catacamas, was probably used for an unknown period before the discovery of America. Columbus found it common among the Indians of Cuba in 1492, and in 1565 Hernandez de Toledo sent a tobacco-plant to Spain as "a plant of the New World possessing extraordinary virtues." The seeds are usually sown in the shade of a tree, and the plants set out when about the size of a dollar. The cultivation commences in November. The method of cutting and curing the leaf is a rude imitation of that pursued in the West Indies.

The tobacco of Santa Rosa, in the Department of Gracias, is the best known in Central America, excepting that of Sonsonate, in San Salvador. It is a source of revenue to the government, the right to sell the article being rented to the highest bidders, who, of course, enjoy the monopoly of the trade. With proper cultivation, the tobacco of Honduras might obtain a reputation it can never reach under the present order of affairs. Hitherto it has remained almost unknown to the world, but latterly the Santa Rosa cigars are becoming celebrated along the Central American coast. On the Transit Route they command a high price, and one cargo has been shipped to San Francisco from the Bay of Fonseca. Since the invasions of the Department of Gracias by the Guatemalans, the cultivation of tobacco, as well as of other staples, has been greatly retarded.

We rode into Jutecalpa on the following evening, somewhat wearied with the jaunt, but delighted with the new features of Central American life, manners, and scenery it had opened to our inspection.

Another week at Jutecalpa. It would be needless here to detail the routine of little festivities to which I was invited when my determination to depart was known, or the complimentary visits received from my many kind friends. One begged I would send the Americans from *el Norte* to occupy Olancho before the British could overrun it; another promised to disclose the richest *placeres* in the department when I returned with a colony; another desired I would remain a few weeks longer to examine a vein of gold near the village of Agalta, some forty miles northwest of Jutecalpa, where gold could be seen by breaking off pieces of the quartz; still another had afforded medical aid to an old woman in the Salto range, who, in return, had offered to disclose a locality where gold could be "scraped up;" this he would follow up, and write me the particulars of in *el Norte*. It is needless to say I have never heard since of the *empresario* or his mine.

On the night previous to my departure, a grand ball and supper was given at the house of Señor Garay in honor of my visit. At eight o'clock not less than fifty of the Jutecalpans had collected. The house was lighted with tallow candles. A band of guitars and wind instruments occupied the end of the room, and the dancing was opened by the Niña Teresa (the heroine of the courtship story before referred to) and a young blade of Jutecalpa named Alejo Jurmanito. Songs and guitar voluntaries followed. After each vocal effort, the gay wife of Don Santiago Zelaya would lean over to me and say,

"*Ahora! como le parece á Vd. la musica?*" to which, of course, I replied with my most elaborate praise.

An audience with light hearts and simple wishes were easily excited to laughter, with which the house rang at frequent comic songs of Jurmanito. A keen appreciation of the ludicrous and love of mirth is certainly a distinguishing characteristic of the Olanchanos.

After the ball, a few friends remained and gravely discussed the future prospects of Olancho, and on parting I received a spe-

cial commission to bring with me on my return from *el Norte* a variety of carved figures and paintings for the church, a church clock, a pump, some silver watches, a package of pills and other medicines, fruit-seeds, fire-works for the ensuing *funcion*, a number of blue cloaks, fire-arms, cutlery, some ten chandeliers in which to burn candles for the church, and an endless amount of fans, ribbons, dress-patterns, and gewgaws for the ladies, all of which I was assured I should receive an immense profit on, and for which all agreed to commence at once the collection of hides, sarsaparilla, horns, tallow, vanilla, gold dust, and precious productions of various kinds.

"We shall await," said they, "the arrival of the steam-boat coming up the Guayape, Don Guillermo, and when you arrive we will show all your friends how we can receive them in Olancho."

On the following morning I rode through the streets, and, after exchanging hearty "*Adios!*" with all, our cavalcade started for Lepaguare. Roberto was crazy with delight at turning his face at last toward his dear Tegucigalpa, and as the bend of Sacate Verde shut the town from view, he apostrophized the beauties of his native city with a well-known song, of which these are the two first stanzas:

"Si me muero que me intieren  
 Junto al sol del medio dia  
 Donde nacen las morenas,  
 De la hermosa Andalusia.  
 Si me pierdo que me busquen  
 Junto al sol del medio dia  
 Donde nacen las morenas,  
 De la hermosa Andalusia."

The song, delivered with the nasal whine peculiar to the Spanish vocalist, was assisted in the chorus by Victor, whose pleasure at the prospect of returning was quite equal to that of Roberto. Before recovering from their musical fit, they had several times shouted through the well-known and almost national *cancion* known as "*Mañanita Mañanita.*"

At Lepaguare I found the general awaiting our arrival. Here we remained a few weeks. The señora was slowly recovering, and, much to my gratification, attributed her convalescence to the *remedios* I had left on my last visit. I had my own opin-



ions on this subject, but for obvious reasons did not express them. Here again, accompanied by the general or his brothers, I rode over the entire Zelaya estates, visiting all the best-known gold *placeros*, and making notes at the end of each trip. I lack space to describe each "gold locality" which we visited. The Almacigueras, San Nicolas, Barros, and others, all famous in Olancho, were in turn explored. Accounts of them would but repeat in effect what has been already written of other places. By far the most interesting of these excursions was the visit to the Espumoso or foam, a rapid and whirlpool in the Guayape,



EL ESPUMOSO.

about midway between the Murcielago and the village of Aleman. Here have been known in olden times the richest gold diggings in Olancho. Evidences of ancient workings still exist, and very fine gold may be washed out from the earth or sand in every square foot of earth. Without machinery, or the methods now pursued in California and Australia, this gold could not be profitably collected, unless, as I suppose, coarser speci-



mens exist below where any recent attempts have been made. The ancients have possibly exhausted these diggings.

Señor Cacho, Minister of Finance of Honduras, at one time organized a company to work the Espumoso, supposed to be the richest gold deposit in the world. It is believed that the gold, brought down in fine particles from above, has lodged in the deep excavation beneath the falls from the fact that, though considerable quantities are found in the banks above, none is to be obtained below. The enterprise of Señor Cacho, as well as that of several others whose attention has been drawn to this spot, was destroyed, as usual, by revolutions. In 1849 it was granted to Mr. A. J. Marié, whose period of inception having expired while attempting to organize a company in the United States, the general swore at first that he would be at no further trouble in regard to it. He saw reason, however, to change his mind.

The approaches to the Espumoso from Aleman, or the gold bar of Murcielago above, are picturesque and varied. The solitude is profound. No trace of human industry or of habitations—not even the smoke of a distant camp-fire to indicate the presence of humanity. We rode over hills reminding me of some parts of Massachusetts, wooded in copses, with a great variety of trees and shrubbery, separated by slopes and plains of grass. A low ridge, crowned with cedar, mahogany, India-rubber, and oak trees, impedes the course of the Guayape, which rushes down between walls of rock two hundred feet apart, plunging into a deep basin, or pot, which the torrent seems to have hollowed out for itself, as may be seen at the Merrimac, in the vicinity of Franconia.

We stood near the bank, and contemplated in silence the tumbling, foaming water. To a Californian it was not difficult to picture a company of bearded, stalwart men building, as they do in these days, a grand water-way or timber-sluice to carry the torrent of the Guayape high over the Espumoso, and leave dry and accessible the treasury below. “Damming the river” it is sometimes called in California; a process, in another sense, often applied to the river and all connected with it after a season of fruitless labor, but which, if tradition speaks truly, would hardly be the case with the Espumoso. The difficulties, however, of turning the river, or even of conducting the waters by

flumes above the edge of the falls, are very great, and will probably never be attempted. The riches of the Espumoso are only conjectural, and can be tested by divers quite as satisfactorily and much more economically than by fluming.

After several days of necessary Spanish delay, we seated ourselves one morning, after breakfast, around the great cedar table in the *sala*, and now commenced the formation of our long-mooted contract. At the head of the table sat Don Francisco, nicely shaven, and his gray, curly hair combed for the occasion. He had also donned his best suit. The brothers Jose Manuel, Santiago, and Jose Maria occupied two sides of the table, L—— and myself the other. It was evident that the subject had been deliberately discussed during my journey to Catacamas, the formation of a contract for the disposal of the time-honored Zelaya estates being too grave a matter for trivial consideration. But matters moved slowly.

The least display of haste excited suspicion of some important point to be gained which I was anxious to hurry beyond scrutiny, and extra delay was invariably the consequence. The value of every word was considered. The qualities to be studied in bargaining with Spanish Americans is *patience* first, then not to exhibit any anxiety or haste; leave the business on hand, fall back in your seat, light your *cigarro*, and chat away on general subjects; take a *traigito* occasionally, throw in an anecdote illustrating the rush of life and trade in *el Norte*, and affairs will go pleasantly enough, but never try to hurry a Central American.

By two o'clock, with frequent intervals, we had got through but three articles, which had been re-read and re-written until, what with alterations in Spanish and English, the letters fairly danced before my eyes. That night I lay thinking over the progress made during the day, and quaking over the anticipated revisals of the morrow. I remembered several bottles of Cognac sent from Balize, which had been placed in the *alforjas* on the morning of our departure from Jutecalpa by Señor Ocampo.

On the following morning, at daybreak, I produced one of these, and, drawing the cork, invited the general to taste the contents. His daily potations being confined to the *aguardiente del pais*, he was not long in discovering the superior qual-

ity of the Cognac. Before breakfast he had thrice renewed his acquaintance with the black bottle.

We had scarcely renewed the consideration of the contract, when, in the middle of the fourth article, the general paused, and, turning to me with a bland smile, remarked, "*Vamos á besar la viuda!*" (Let's kiss the widow). The rest of the company wished to know who the general's widow might be, when the lady was introduced and placed on the table. It was not long before all present had paid their respects to the widow, who at last exhausted herself in dispensing her favors.

Thenceforth the widow was the umpire in all disputed points, and such was her soothing influence that in three days the contract had been written, copied, and sent on its way to Jutecalpa for official signature. L—— started for Tegucigalpa with Victor, the revolutionary rumors exciting his anxiety about home. The widow, however, did not cease her influence with the conclusion of the contract, but helped to keep the brothers good-natured until the whole gift of Don Opolonio was expended.

During these few weeks at Lepaguare, which was in December and January (months commonly supposed to be far into the dry season of Central America), we had frequent showers, night and day, with thunder and lightning. *Vaqueros* came shivering around the fires built in the court-yard, complaining bitterly of the cold. With the wind from the north, a fire was indispensable for comfort. I was assured that hail (*piedras de granizo*) had fallen within a few days in the mountains, and that scarcely a year passed without hail falling in the higher ranges.

The general made annual purchases at Omoa and Truxillo of cloths and drillings, which his own mule-trains brought up from the coast, and from which the surrounding haciendas were supplied. On Sunday the yard was filled with people from all directions, who, in turn, entered the house and carefully examined the goods. From these visitors I obtained endless accounts of the gold mines, and many of them, speaking from personal experience, seemed worthy of credence.

Cerro Gordo, or big hill, stands on the plain of Lepaguare, fronting the hacienda, and here a woman, who had been a *lavadera*, pointed out from where we stood a ridge of quartz rock

which she said was gold-bearing. In the brook flowing at its base, great sums of gold, she said, had been washed out. Another knew of twenty localities where "dry gold" had been found. The *mayor-domo* of Ulua, who had been a gold-seeker in his day, asserted that the deposits in the Guayape were nothing to those of the Mangulile or Mirojoco, on the head-waters of the river Roman or Aguan. Here, he says, pieces of gold have been found near the surface weighing more than a pound. These mines, he said, may be reached *via* the Roman River. "Lumps of clay had been found along the banks with pieces of gold *weighing from two to three pounds*, and of the mass *more than half pure gold*." The recent discoveries on the north coast of Honduras, on the River Papaloteca, would seem to afford partial corroboration to the gold stories of that region.

Señor Bustillos at Jutecalpa had received from President Cabañas the appointment of Indian Superintendent of the tribes of Olancho, the object of the office being to protect them as far as possible in their relations with the other races. This gentleman, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Cabañas, in a long conversation I had with him on the subject of gold, assured me that he had ascertained many startling facts relative to the former productiveness of the gold mines. *Pounds* of pure gold were brought in the olden time and sold by the Indians in Olancho Viejo, and especially in the town of Culmí, to the northward. The padres in those days knew their hiding-places for gold. They still, said he, have hidden mines of gold, which no coaxing will induce them to discover. There is a gold mine near Jutecalpa, continued my informant, bearing the aboriginal name of Jotejiagua, in the mountain of Sapote Verde. That this was once immensely productive, the most reliable accounts attest; but, after the settlement of the Spaniards, the Indians closed it up, and destroyed all traces of its existence. It has been the object of search for many years, and evidences of old workings and implements have been found, but never the mine.

I should not here neglect the account given me by my old friend, Señor Garay, of Jutecalpa, of the gold deposits at his hacienda of *El Panal*, to the northward of Lepaguare, near the boundary of Yoro. In 1836, my informant was engaged in branding cattle on his hacienda, and there met with Señor La-



vaeri, a Spanish doctor, who, failing in some silver-mining enterprises in Mexico, had come to Honduras to retrieve his fortunes. The doctor was now engaged in working a gold mine not far from the old man's hacienda. By a gold mine was meant that in one of the streams of that vicinity he had discovered a deposit of the precious metal, and had some rude machinery at work to separate it from the earth and sand.

Señor Garay visited the works, and, finding that the *empresario* was a man after his own heart, he offered to advance the necessary funds, and also to locate the doctor where, if he was fond of working mines rather than owning cattle, he could get rich in one season. He took him to the Quebrada of Panal, and a day's washing with *bateas* yielded two ounces of gold. Soon after the doctor removed all his machinery to this spot, and took into his service another Spaniard named Butanzos, who acted as his foreman. After many days' labor the works were erected, and in a few hours the results of the crushing, filtering, or whatever the machinery consisted of, examined, when two ounces of fine gold were taken out.

But this flattering success was destined not to be continued, for the machinery was found to be located on a bed of moving sand, or quicksand, and in a week was nearly all engulfed. All operations gradually ceased, and Doctor Lavaeri went to the Mangulile River, where, after working two years, he returned to Spain with many pounds of gold. But in the week above-mentioned there was nearly a pound of fine gold taken out of the machine, which the narrator affirms he assisted to weigh. The wreck of the machinery may yet be seen at El Panal, where the old Don asserts there is a fortune in gold, and to any one who will go there and regenerate the works he offers to advance the necessary capital.

El Retiro, already described as situated on the Guayape, is said to have been formerly worked by a native of Honduras named Pedro Herrero. To prevent the workmen from defrauding him, he allowed them, in addition to their wages, the use of his tools, and the privilege of working for themselves two days in the week. The remaining four days' work were reserved for himself, and he is stated to have received sixteen or twenty ounces of gold every Saturday night. But, added my inform-

ant, they always lost the fine gold, which is found in great quantities in the sand, by their careless washing.

Another place on the Guayape, called Alajagua, was once appropriated by an old widow, who employed many workmen in gold-washing. *A pound of gold to the hand* is claimed to have been taken out at this place for many successive days; but one day, following the lead under a cliff of earth and rocks, the whole caved in and killed five men. The padre came and cursed the spot, designated by two peaked rocks, since which none have had the temerity to work there, after exhuming the bodies.

Very rich mines are reported on the banks of the Rio de España, emptying from the southward into the Guayape. These places were formerly worked by the Spaniards, from which the river derives its name. The gold is very deep, for which reason the place is not worked except in the ancient diggings.

A volume of similar accounts might be written to illustrate the former and present mineral wealth of Olancho. These bear exaggeration on their face, and I have repeated them as near *verbatim* as possible, that the reader may form his own opinion of their reliability. The best *veins* of Olancho were probably exhausted centuries since, but there can be no doubt that diggings yet exist that would prove lucrative if properly worked.

A few days after my arrival at Lepaguare, I rode with Don Toribio to a place near the junction of the Almendarez and Guayape, where a *chilpate* fishing was to take place. On arriving at the river, we found a small party of natives collected on the banks of the smaller stream, engaged in spreading withes and a network of branches below a little series of falls or rapids above which the fish were known to exist in great quantities, especially the *cuyamel*, weighing often fifteen pounds when full grown.

The preparations completed, a few women entered the river about fifty yards above the rapids, bearing with them a common *batea* containing a decoction of a vine pounded to a pulp, and known as the *chilpate* (possibly the *Sapindus saponaria*), and which may be gathered in any required quantity in the plains and along the banks of the streams. This possesses the singular quality, when mixed with the waters of a running stream, of

stupefying the fish, causing them to float helplessly on the surface. When carried down the stream, they are taken by hand from the network below. The signal being given, this novel fishing apparatus was directed against the inhabitants of Al-mendarez.

As the pale discoloration extended with the influence of the gentle current, my companion shouted to me to watch its effects. All eyes were riveted upon the water. In a few minutes a commotion was visible beneath the surface, and frequent flaps from the tails of sundry inebriated fish indicated the working of the drug.

The natives now ran below the falls to catch the victims who came floating down, some with fins or tails feebly wagging above the water, others "half-seas over," "regularly laid out" on their backs, and others as if under the effects of a systematic "drunk," struggling against the liquor, and apparently determined to keep on their fins to the last gasp. There were fish of all sizes, from the cuyamel down to minnows. It was the most ludicrous, and, at the same time, strange scene I had witnessed in Olancho, and seemed an unpardonable corruption of respectable fish from their original teetotal habits.



CHILPATE FISHING.



Below the rapids the operations were not less curious. With the rapid accumulation of the victimized fish, we all rushed into the water and threw them out upon the bank. There were some five dozen in all, among which, besides those already mentioned, were guapotes, peces, and a pretty species of speckled trout. The smallest of the prisoners were thrown back into the water, where, after floating a while, they gradually became sober and swam away.

The genuine sportsman will call this sad pot-hunting, and the disciples of Sir Isaac sneer at such a wanton desecration of Nature's gifts; but let them live a few months on the general fare of Honduras, and their scruples would probably yield to an Olancho appetite. At least, I consoled myself in this manner while discussing a glorious fry of our victims on the following morning.

I was just congratulating myself on the successful issue of my contract with the Zelayas when a courier arrived from Jutecalpa with the news that the two brothers there had refused to sign it on any conditions. The Guatemalans had invaded Gracias with Guardiola, a sworn enemy to all Americans, at their head. They feared his vengeance, and a war between Olancho and the rest of Honduras in consequence. The famous Kinney Expedition, with the claims to the Mosquito Coast (which perhaps might extend into Olancho itself), had arrived at San Juan. The news had just arrived from Truxillo, and there was an end to the negotiations. The brothers at Lepaguaré refused to sign the contract unless all would agree to it, and I now saw my air-castle tumbling ingloriously to the ground.

I was not long, however, in persuading the general to ride back to Jutecalpa, where we arrived at night, and were received with the usual kindness. Another week here spent in arguing, persuading, and arranging, at last brought round the disaffected brothers, who signified their assent to the contract. It was signed, sealed, and attested to by the proper authorities.

On the last night, my old friend, Señor Francisco Ayala, *jefe politico*, allowed me to examine the departmental records of Olancho. These do not go back to the earliest settlement of the state by the Spaniards. At Manto, the former capital after the destruction of Olancho Viejo, are deposited the records pre-



vicious to 1671, which was probably the year in which the seat of government was removed to Jutecalpa.

The paper was coarse, but strong, bearing the government stamp. The documents are written in obsolete, abbreviated Spanish, and almost obliterated with age and the inroads of insects. Some of them were quite unintelligible. The patents from the Spanish crown, conveying the present Zelaya estates to Señor Geronimo Zelaya in 1540, are said to be in good preservation at Manto. This cavalier, as Don Santiago, his descendant, affirms, came over with Pedro de Alvarado, and was the first settler in the valley of the Guayape. As the history of the early settlements in Central America is accurately described by the Spanish historians, the fact, if true, can be easily established. The Don gave me a detailed account of the expedition of his doughty ancestor into Olancho, the attacks and cattle-thefts by the savages, the discovery of the gold, and the rapid peopling of these beautiful valleys by the enraptured Spaniards, who at last made Olancho what it has since remained, the great cattle-raising section of Central America.

Another hearty adieu, and I took my final leave of Jutecalpa, and from Lepaguare two days afterward, where the whole family rode out with me across the plain to Cerro Gordo, where we dismounted, and, in turn, embraced after the fashion of the country. The party, excepting Don Toribio, then turned back, waving their handkerchiefs until an intervening copse hid them from view. My companion gave me a particular charge for Tegucigalpa, and then, grasping my hand for the last time, turned his horse toward the hacienda and spurred homeward.

I confess to a feeling of downright home-sickness as I rose the hill and gazed back upon the lovely valley, stretching away like a sea, and glowing in the beauties of the fresh morning. The slant sunbeams mingled with the mists and spangled dews of the plain. Far away appeared a piece of the even more beautiful valley of Galeras, teeming with cattle, and green as an emerald. Toward the hacienda I observed Don Toribio dashing along, and the herds of cattle and horses starting aside as the bold horseman scampered past. It was a scene peculiar to Olancho. I stood in precisely the same spot whence, some months before, after a weary scramble on mule-back among the

mountains, we had come suddenly out upon this landscape of flowers, and blue and purple mountains. The same route was again to be traversed, but the prospect of the lonely journey was now divested of the charm of novelty, and I looked in fancy beyond the shores of Central America, to where the stir and life of civilization invited with an enchantment more powerful than the soft climes and gorgeous scenery of the tropics. The American, to fully appreciate his native land, must first learn, by bitter deprivation and contrast, its incomparable blessings. I turned away with such reflections toward the steep ascent, up which Roberto had already urged the mules, and, as I wheeled into the path, gazed my last upon Olancho.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

Guaymaca.—La Niña Alvina.—Talanga.—A night in the House of Don Gregorio Moncada.—Cofradilla.—Doña Tomasa.—Tegucigalpa.—Hospitable Reception.—Silver.—The *Minerales* of Tegucigalpa.—A trip to Santa Lucia.—La Mina Grande.—Silver Mill.—The Road.—Descent into la Mina de San Martin.—Method of extracting the Ores.—La Mina de Gatal.—Want of Machinery and Knowledge.—Former Productiveness.—Present Yields.—Speculations on the Origin of Silver.—A Taladro.—A *Campana*.—Wandering Miners.—Ascent of el Monte de Santa Lucia.—Villa Nueva.—La Mina de Peña.—La Mina de Zopilote.—Primitive Smelting process.—Copper-hill of El Chimbo.—Captain Moore.—Legends of the Mines.—La Mina de Guayabillas.—Story of its Discovery.—The Arjenal Family.—English Enterprise.—“La Fatalidad del Pais.”—Last Days of the Guayabilla Mine.—Departure for Home.—Amapala again.—The War.—“The Walker Contract.”—Bay of Fonseca by Moonlight.—At Sea in a Launch.—Realejo.—San Juan.—An American Steam-ship.—Home.

THE route through the mountains toward Campamento has already been described. Passing the night there, we resumed the journey at early dawn, and renewed our acquaintance with the Señora Hipolita and her pretty daughter at Guaymaca at evening. The latter disappeared a few minutes after my arrival, and shortly afterward returned with my present of a former occasion made up into a becoming dress. There was as little to eat as ever in lonely Guaymaca, but the scriptural proverb was happily illustrated in this instance, for the Niña Alvina returned directly from an exploring expedition around the village, laden with a live fowl, some *frijolitas* and eggs. After supper the young woman deigned to cut up some excellent tobacco for

my pipe, and in the morning a substantial breakfast was ready cooked, in readiness for the day's journey.

From Guaymaca to Talanga is a *journada*, or one day's journey. We reached the town at sunset, and made directly for the adobe house of our former host, Don Gregorio. We found him in the midst of his game-cocks, of which he owned eight, each tied by the leg to a square block of wood, and some crowing defiance even at that late hour.

The Don apologized for the non-appearance of the señora, who, he hinted with a consequential air, was soon to present him with an addition to the Moncada family. As night set in, the bells of the church announced the hour of *oracion*. The women in the house (there were five) fell to praying with such volubility that I imagined the important event could not be far away.

At eight o'clock the candle was extinguished, and the family retired—to sleep; but for me, to tumble on the bench which I had taken possession of for want of room to swing the hammock. To sleep here was impossible. A number of pigs had lain down outside the door, brought thither by the cold, and their continual wrangling for room or the inside place, accompanied with a querulous squeaking, continued until after midnight, when, wearied and irritated into a fever of rage, I opened the door and smashed a huge club among them, sending the party grunting into the Plaza. The night was cold and cloudy, and the village silent as the grave. Closing the door, I essayed to sleep again, but the pigs, with several companions, shortly returned to their post. A young goat, confined in the kitchen, commenced to bleat at regular intervals for the rest of the night, while the frequent demands of Don Gregorio's progeny gave rise at times to interesting family debates, the whole conducted in the blackest darkness.

Toward morning, the fatigue of the past day's ride across the treeless mountain-tops gained the ascendancy over all other sentiments, and, despite the assaults of fleas, who swarmed in the hut, I had just fallen into a doze, when the game-cocks, who had been tied inside the house for safety, commenced their morning screams until daylight, when, feverish, exhausted, and half crazy, I crept into the street, and ordered Roberto to find the animals and get us out of San Diego de Talanga at once.

Despite the fleas and the infernal din, Don Gregorio slumbered calmly in his corner, and grumbled drowsily when the women invaded the house and drove him and his game-cocks into the street. Roberto was two hours finding the mules; and when I had given him up, and resolved to buy one and proceed alone, he suddenly appeared with them from an unexpected quarter. In another half hour they were packed, and, mounting my own, I bid a hasty adieu to San Diego.

I have since thought that the haste of our departure and the absence of the usual profuse compliments left Don Gregorio somewhat in doubt as to my gratitude and good breeding. Be that as it may, I thought another hour in Talanga (whose horrors I have feebly portrayed) would have made me a candidate for the insane asylum. May the increasing responsibilities of Don Gregorio Moncada live to prove a pride and honor to him! a result greatly to be doubted while their father confines his occupation to smoking paper cigars and cock-fighting.

Anxious to conclude the journey, which had now become one of intense pain from a wounded foot, which prevented my wearing a boot, I left Roberto behind and pursued the path alone. The sun beat down mercilessly upon bare limestone mountains of such dazzling whiteness that the traveler must often keep a handkerchief over his face to preserve his eyesight.

At dark, the huts of Cofradilla appeared unexpectedly in sight, where the pain obliged me to dismount at the first cabin. Good luck directed me to that of the principal person there, an old deaf woman, who had recently come here from Tegucigalpa. My request for lodgings was answered with a shake of the head and the words "*Soy sorda, señor*," at the same time putting her hand to her ear. I raised my voice with no better success, when a young negress came to the door, and by signs intimated my desire.

After several questions relative to my destination, and becoming satisfied that I was not connected with the Revolution, permission was granted, though the old woman was suspicious of my dress and foreign accent, and, above all, of my not having a servant, without which no *caballero* travels in Honduras. Her fears vanished after my explanations, and, on displaying some copper money, she prepared a supper of dried meat and *tortillas*.



On learning I was an *American*, the old woman began to besiege me for *remedios* for her deafness; and not wishing to disappoint her, and at the same time believing in the harmlessness of my prescription, I recommended diurnal baths of hot water (of which I thought she decidedly stood in need), and lotions of aguardiente and salt to be applied to the feet! I felt assured that, should her hearing return, she would attribute it to my prescription, and if not, that the most celebrated physicians are not always infallible. But Doña Tomasa—thus she was named—need apply no remedies. Time, that grim destroyer of all our faculties, had laid his inexorable hand upon her.

A cold norther, attended with rain, was blowing in the morning at daylight. Roberto had not yet arrived. At Rio Abajo, however, he overtook me, and gave me a fearful account of losing his path, and falling down a declivity in the inky darkness of the night. The horse was so injured as to make it necessary to kill him, and his own bloody appearance proved his narrow escape. The remaining animals were turned out to graze, when, mounting fresh mules, we started for Tegucigalpa, where my old friend, Señor Losano, welcomed me with his usual cordiality.

My account of Olancho occupied the entire evening. The old Don scrutinized my contract, and, with true Spanish enthusiasm, already looked forward to the renewal of the “good old colony times” as he remembered them when a boy. He devoted the following day to circulating about the town the brilliant future of Olancho under the auspices of *los Americanos del Norte*, and before a week there were two parties in Tegucigalpa, one opposed to the entrance of Americans into Olancho, and the other loud in their expressions in favor of the future “regenerators of the country.”

The invasion by the Guatemalans had drawn the government into the department of Gracias, where President Cabañas was preparing to attack the enemy. The signature of the Minister of Foreign Relations being necessary for the validity of my contract with the authorities in Olancho, the document was dispatched to Llanos de Santa Rosa, where it was several weeks under executive consideration before the proper seals and signatures could be affixed.

During this time I made such excursions into the surrounding country as my lameness would permit, to continue my examinations of the silver mines in that department. In a following chapter I have thrown together such facts as I could collect relating to these mines, which, though incomplete, and presenting but a superficial view of their value, may serve to show the immense treasures stored in the hills of Honduras awaiting the labor and intelligence of foreign enterprise.

The gold of modern discovery has widened the basis of our commerce, and, as an object of productive industry, has given birth to two new commercial centres which will divide between them the wealth of the Pacific. These events are more important than revolutions.

But if gold has thus established for itself a new dignity and power as a cause and instigator of progress, no less must the virtue of silver be speedily acknowledged, when its production, like the sister metal, shall fall, once for all, into the hands of Anglo-Saxon industry, and under the ken of its prophetic intelligence.

Honduras, west of the Department of Olancho, is intersected with veins of silver, which in the last two centuries have poured many millions of treasure into Europe, and have even competed with the richest of Peru and Mexico. Its secluded position, away from the routes of commerce, has, until recently, prevented its receiving the attention of capitalists, such as has given so powerful an impetus to the mines of other Spanish-American republics. In the Departments of Gracias, Comayagua, Choluteca, and Tegucigalpa, hundreds of silver veins are known, any one of which, worked with scientific and economical apparatus, would certainly enrich those engaging in such enterprises. My own observations were confined to the mines of the last-named department, where every facility was afforded me for inspecting them.

Tegucigalpa contains within its boundaries ten "*minerales*," or mining districts, each of which has its group or cluster of important mines, most of them long since opened, and many in good working condition. In company with Señor Jose Ferrari, I visited the mineral of Santa Lucia, near Tegucigalpa. A few

hours' ride brought us to the summit of the Santa Lucia range of mountains, though to our right a green peak arose about a thousand feet above us. From our position we had a fine view of Santa Lucia, a small but prettily-built town, apparently embowered in trees, and adorned with a neat white church. *Milpas* and wheat-fields were pointed out on the slopes of these ranges, and the señor mentioned a grist-mill, worked by ox-power, in one of the villages below.

On the descent toward this valley we turned aside to examine the Mina Grande, celebrated for the breadth of its veins. It is the joint property of Señor Ferrari and the heirs of Francisco Losano. The principal vein is eleven *varas* (thirty-three feet) in thickness, and yields a good working percentage to the ton of ore. As yet, only four *escaleras* have been made, although the mine was formerly the property of the Rosas, a wealthy Spanish family. They had conducted the works but two years, when the independence of 1821 cut off all political relations with Spain, when, for that and other causes, they abandoned the mine, as well as those of Gatal and San Martin, which were allowed to fall to ruin. The entrance to the principal vein is situated on a piece of pine-wooded table-land, near the summit of a mountain of limestone on the highway to Santa Lucia, more than 4100 feet above the sea.

As we arrived, two old Indians were pounding up the rich ore between two large stones; but even by this rude and inefficient process they earned a fair living, and a profit for the proprietors. The best-organized works employ simple machinery for pounding, which consists of two irregular mill-stones dragged around in a circular stone water-trough by mules or oxen pulling at a long beam which turns on a centre-post like an old-fashioned cider-mill. This is sometimes called a *trapiche*, but oftener a *rastrar*, or drag. Those which I saw elsewhere moved stupidly around, crushing, it may be, half a ton a day very imperfectly. The crushed ore is treated by fire or quicksilver, or both, according to the nature of the substance. A good crushing-machine of modern make, such as is used by quartz miners in California and Australia, would do more than twenty times the work of these rickety mills, and with nearly as little cost. A single mill would prepare ore enough in the Mina Grande to

yield immense sums, if one may judge by the returns from the present ignorant methods pursued.\*

The *mayor-domo* told me, with great Spanish pathos, that they lost half their silver by bad machinery and stupid management. As evidences of the extent of former workings and the careless methods pursued, I noticed many heaps of refuse ore and rock (*respalde*), some of which would be a fortune to a Yankee miner, with his crushers and his science.

We descended from the Mina Grande, with a noble landscape before us, through a growth of shrubbery and pitch-pine. A sea of hills, forested to their crowns, lay around us. Arrived at the foot of this eminence, we began the ascent of another, near the summit of which stands the mining *aldea* of Santa Lucia.

This village is deserted in winter by the scantily-clad natives, owing to the inclement weather, frequent hail-storms, it is said, then passing over it. During the summer it is a place of frequent resort from Tegucigalpa, for the healing qualities attributed to the atmosphere, and the thousands of roses growing on the slopes of the mountain.

Our tough little mules struggled up the steep road, and at eleven o'clock we had reached the highest point, 4320 feet above the sea. The temperature did not exceed 72° Fahrenheit at noon. We stopped at a small adobe belonging to Señor Fialles, and the servant, who was loaded with provisions, soon spread an excellent dinner, of which we gratefully partook after the toil of the morning. After dinner and a comfortable smoke we resumed our journey, traversing by a rough road a dense forest for several miles, and arrived at two o'clock before a small hamlet of adobe houses, the property of Señor Ferrari, one of which covered the entrance of the great San Martin Mine, said to be the richest in the district.

\* Since leaving Honduras, I have been informed that Dr. Charles Doratt, a gentleman of scientific knowledge in mining matters, has assumed the management of two mines near Tegucigalpa, which for some years previously had been worked to little advantage by the natives, and that, since the commencement of his superintendence, the mines have yielded a large amount of silver, all of which has been saved in the melting process by the superior knowledge of the foreigner. These mines, which were formerly offered for sale, are now not to be purchased at any reasonable sum, though their intrinsic value has not increased. Hundreds of other mines await the magic influence of American and European intelligence to make them equally remunerative.



The largest adobe in the little group was designated by our conductor as a store-house, where the most valuable ore is collected until it can be carried to the mill, three miles distant. Another house served as the residence for the mayor-domo, and a third for workmen. The entrance to the mine is on the brow of the mountain, looking northeastward against a spur of the Cordilleras called the Lapaterique range, which divides the Department of Comayagua from that of Tegucigalpa. Some of its peaks are among the highest in the state. Through a gap or depression in this spur we saw the distant peak of Comayagua,



CONE OF COMAYAGUA.

near the city of that name, rising like a pyramid of indigo in the clear evening air. The foliage of the great valleys and hill-sides which environed us was diversified with varied tints, the brighter shades of oak and shrubbery contrasting with the ever-green darkness of the pines.

We prepared for a descent into the Mina de San Martin by first taking each a "stiff horn" of aguardiente to guard against the subterranean cold. Then, with a naked Indian, bearing a

tallow candle, to precede us, and another, in similar costume, to bring up the rear, we began our descent into the "cellarage."

Before entering the mine I noted down the miners' vocabulary, which includes a variety of technical expressions. The ore itself, which they call *brosa*, is a combination or mixture of crystallized minerals: limestone, quartz, sulphuret of lead, of antimony, of iron, and of copper, fill up the irregular fissure, or break in the mass of the *respalde* or live rock. A vein of ore (*veta*) may lie between two vast beds of flat rock like a sheet between two blankets, and penetrating into the mountain; or it may be simply the contents of a crack or fissure, descending into the lower regions of the earth to an incalculable depth.

The metal (*metal*) sometimes discovers threads of pure silver, penetrating the crevices of the rock like the fibrous roots of a plant; but the quantity of this is never great; and the best mines are those that furnish a steady yield of rock-ore or *brosa*. It is probable that the sulphurets of silver, antimony, copper, mercury, lead, and iron, which are found in these crevices, have risen up, either in the form of vapor or of lava (liquid rock), from volcanic furnaces in the deep chambers of the earth.

We entered first what is called a *fronton*, or horizontal chamber or drift; but this terminated immediately over a perpendicular shaft or well, in mining language a *pozo*. Down this, preceded by our guide, we commenced a slow and cautious backward climb, by means of an upright log of oak, with notches cut in it by way of steps for the feet and hands. These are denominated *escaleras*, and are usually four *varas*, or eleven and a quarter feet in length each. They are similar in every respect to the "Samson post" leading down the hatchway of a ship into the lower hold.

At the foot of each *escalera* is a small platform of earth, just wide enough for a landing-place; the drift is then horizontal for a few feet, and a second *escalera* commences. The descent into the silent gloom of one of these mines is by no means inviting. The reflection that others have gone before, and go every day without danger, is hardly sufficient to assure one. At the foot of the second *escalera* the darkness became impenetrable, and here was the commencement of a *fronton*, with galleries branching out, their roofs supported on either side by walls of solid

*respalde*, cut with great regularity, and the roof propped, in addition, with pillars of heavy oaken timber, between which glittered bright reflections from the crystalline ore. The air of this cavern had the clammy dampness of a neglected dungeon. Half way down, a faint rumbling sound was heard, like the echo of footsteps in a hollow vault. This arose from the blows of the miners far below us.

After a fatiguing descent, we found ourselves at the bottom of the mine, at a depth of 164 feet: the temperature at this point was 68° Fahrenheit. From the bottom of the lower *escalera* the vein had taken a more horizontal direction, and was excavated in caverns with arched roofs, which now re-echoed to the blows of the miners, who struck the rock with pointed bars of iron, breaking off portions of the ore, and emitting at every blow a peculiar hollow groan, very painful to hear for one unaccustomed to the sound, but which a tall Herculean fellow assured me was necessary to the *barratero*, or crowbar-man, and materially eased his labor.

The cold damp, the haggard expression communicated to all our faces by the candle-light reflected from the shining ores, the wild and unnatural look of these subterranean workmen, the dark openings leading away to unknown depths and distances into the solid heart of the earth, the idea that the mountain hanging overhead might at any moment fall in and exclude us from the light of day—an accident for which the miner has a word in his dialect, *cámpana*—quite satisfied me with this first exploration of a Honduras silver mine.

One of the workmen drove his bar into a bank or shelf of ore, which, after some drilling and tugging, yielded like soft clay, falling out in pieces of from ten to thirty pounds weight. We pocketed as much as we dared ascend with. After climbing over yawning chasms, which seemed like wells of liquid night, we arrived, panting and perspiring, at the light of day.

Each renewed the pull at the aguardiente bottle, which the old Don seemed to consider a panacea to be resorted to on all occasions. While we were resting, the mayor-domo, a civil, intelligent fellow, gave me a clear account of the methods used in extracting the silver, which is elsewhere described. The specimens of ore from the Santa Lucia and other mines in this de-



partment, amounting to seven lots in all, averaged, when treated by American chemists, \$72 to the ton; the lowest being \$17 97, and the highest \$218 58 cents per ton; but the workmen of Señor Ferrari realize no approximation to such an amount.

The mayor-domo complained bitterly of the lack of machinery and knowledge in working the mine, and the proprietor joined him, and offered a quarter of the entire proceeds if I would, of my own knowledge, or with the assistance of a good chemist, enable him to save his great losses in silver and quicksilver by the introduction of a good modern process.

Nature has done every thing for Honduras; man—at least in the present age—almost nothing. A silver mine in Connecticut or Delaware, yielding \$20 of silver to the ton, would be a valuable property. The Germans work ores of argentiferous galena which yield only \$5 or \$10 to the ton, and even at these figures they are not unprofitable. Large investments of capital are made in mines of an inferior quality in the United States, and roads constructed to reach them, which cost twice what would probably be required to control the access to Santa Lucia. It is our ignorance of Honduras which has thus far allowed us to leave it a hidden and useless treasure. Not many years can pass before this darkness will have been dissipated by the reports of explorers, and a new source of wealth be opened to the world.

Although, under the Spanish rule, millions of treasure were taken from the mines of Honduras, we are not therefore to suppose that the methods of mining were in those days any better, or the arts of metallurgy more advanced. The secret of the great yield lay in the number of workmen employed in taking out and crushing the ore. Machinery in extracting, and skill in amalgamating and refining, such as is now practiced in Germany, has from the first been entirely wanting. The profits of silver mining in Honduras under the Spanish colonial system is shown by a report of the Master of the Mint of Tegucigalpa, and published in 1828 by Henry Dunn, in his work on Guatemala, p. 223. This report purports to set forth the amount of silver and gold coined at the Mint for the fifteen years immediately preceding and fifteen years subsequent to 1810. It denies that this is all the mines have produced in that time, but that great quantities had been exported, “so that,



according to the calculation of intelligent persons, scarcely a tenth part of the metals obtained within the past six years will have passed through the Mint." The amount of silver coined for thirty years is given as 677,441 marks; amount of gold coined, 1808 marks. Total value of gold and silver coined from 1795 to 1825, \$6,004,214. Mr. Dunn, however, does not credit the statement. The admirable system of the old Spaniards, in collecting and registering statistics of the productions and political affairs of the colonies, seems to have died out with the cessation of the Spanish rule, and a total want of reliable data now debars all attempts to obtain satisfactory information as to every branch of industry, but particularly that of mining.

The method of raising the ore from the mines is by *tanateros*, a class of workmen whose lifelong labor tends wonderfully to develop their muscular system. These men are usually Indians, and are beautiful in form, mild, industrious, and obedient. The same labor would be much more economically performed by a small steam-engine. More than two millions are affirmed to have been netted long previous to the Revolution from the San Martin mine! corresponding with more than *thirty thousand tons* of good ore, allowing the usual losses, from a mine less than 170 feet in depth. This is only one of hundreds of statements of a like extraordinary kind made to strangers visiting the silver mines of Honduras. Mr. Squier describes the new mine of Coloyal, in the Department of Gracias, as yielding "the somewhat startling proportion of 23.63 per cent., or 8476 ounces per ton of 2000 lbs.!" A verbal description of the same mine given me in Tegucigalpa set down the yield of the Coloyal mine as even greater than that. Such statements appear almost fabulous, but are actually realized in Honduras, if the assertions of hundreds of eyewitnesses are to be credited.

From San Martin we rode the same day, not a mile distant, to the *Gatal*, another celebrated mine, also the property of Señor Ferrari. Straight yellow-pine-trees, from sixteen to eighteen inches in diameter, stood along the path. These appeared suitable for mine timber, but are not used when the *roble* or mountain oak can be easily obtained. Notwithstanding my former resolution, I made a second descent into the earth at this point, and found the excavations of the *Gatal* much more exten-

sive and imposing than those of the comparatively modern San Martin. Galleries branch off to the right and left to a great distance, following the course of a second intersecting bed of ore, which traverses the larger or perpendicular vein. One of these, called the *veta azul*, or blue vein, is apparently conformable with the stratification, like a bed of trap interposed between two layers of sandstone, while the other (*veta principal*) is a perpendicular opening. All the fissures of the mountains, and consequently the beds of ore in this *mineral*, run north and south except the *veta azul*.

To explain the causes of these fissures, through which the precious metals have oozed up to the surface from the interior metallic lava lakes of the earth, may hereafter become the task of professional geologists. Did they arise in vapor, condensing upon the walls of the fissures? Were they dissolved in water heated far beyond the temperature of white-heat iron, and prevented from evaporating by the pressure of solid miles of rock above them? Were the fissures made by ancient earthquakes, themselves occasioned by the bulging of the earth as it cooled? Did the metals rise molten in the form of lava? One thing is beyond dispute, however, that the causes, whatever they may have been, pervaded a wide extent of territory, and were deep-seated in the earth. Silver mines in this region seldom give out. Labor in them is discontinued for long periods for political and other reasons, but the veins, when followed, yield in proportion to the energy and means of the proprietor. They vary in width, but are indefinitely continued. Their supply is inexhaustible.

While examining the interior of the Gatal, I observed more carefully the method of propping the roof of the excavation. Wherever the upper surface is shaky or of loose stone, heavy pieces of unhewn timber—oak is preferred—are set under as supports. These supports are not placed with the regularity nor precision of those of European mines, where this work, as is well known, is reduced to a science. Certain rules, however, as laid down in the "*Ordinanzas de la Minería*," and enforced under the crown throughout Spanish America, are yet observed rigidly in Honduras, and in these provisions are made for the height, width, and timbering of adits and galleries.

The weight of the roof, pressing slowly and insensibly downward, will sometimes bend these columns like reeds. Fragments are continually dropping from the roofs of the galleries, but to these dangers the miners grow accustomed. As I was standing in one of the caves which are left by the excavations, I saw over my head a mass of several tons' weight hanging in the crevice, and ready at any moment to fall. Apparently the echo of the voice or the sound of a hammer might have brought it down. One of the miners touched me without speaking, and pointed up to the rock. I stepped quietly out of the way with a sensation like sea-sickness.

A *campana*, or caving in, is not so dangerous an affair, how-



CAMPANA, OR CAVING IN.

ever, as might be imagined. Before the roof comes down, more particularly when the strata above are horizontal, or moderately inclined, the mine gives out a sound, quivering and grumbling; each timber-prop, set close to its fellow, begins to sigh and struggle against the roof like a weary Hercules. The crash comes on slowly. A wind blows out of the mine; the miners run to the main gallery, which is always secure, and a sound is heard for a few minutes, not loud, but awfully demonstrative of the forces at work.

After the departure of the Rosas family in 1823, the Gatal was neglected, and the galleries fell to decay; but recently they have been cleared, and are now worked with considerable results. The mouth of the mine is several hundred feet above the general table-land of the district. Far below, and entering the flank of the mountain, is a subterranean conduit, or water-drift,



called by the miners a *taladro*. Out of this runs all the natural drainage of the mine and the excess poured into it during the rainy season. The drain penetrates horizontally and upward to the galleries, by which it communicates by *pozos* or wells sunk in the remote interior. This *taladro* is estimated to have cost the Rosas \$30,000, when labor, under an arbitrary government, was far less expensive than at present. American miners would have incurred a far greater outlay in drifting this tunnel, and without it the Gatal would be comparatively valueless, as the drainage would then be conducted by the only other method known to the old Spaniards, or those of the present day, that of carrying the water in hide *tañates*, or panniers, slowly and laboriously to the surface. There are but three mines in the *mineral* of Santa Lucia furnished with *taladros*, which, in the olden time, were the chief expense in silver mining, and, with a view to their construction, after a vein was discovered, they were opened on a height, if possible, to give an opportunity for subterranean drainage. Farther to the north, on the summit of the hill, is a *lumbreira*, or air-hole, which must have been equally expensive, as it penetrates to the lower galleries.

As we rode over the country, many places were pointed out by my companions where silver veins had been traced; and there is doubtless a net-work of silver penetrating all the mountains of this district. It will always be impossible to estimate the amount of silver contained in these hills, but it is not saying too much to affirm that the present waste and wear of silver in arts and commerce might be supplied from them.

Having filled a sack with the ore of the *Gatal*, I mounted with the rest, and we turned our faces homeward. At the road side, and beneath the declivity where it had been emptied, I saw not less than a thousand tons of refuse ore, mixed with *respalde*, too poor for transportation by mules to the mill. This will yield a remunerative return if subjected to proper machinery, and can be had for the asking. Señor Ferrari assured me he did not raise more than a ton of ore a day from the Gatal, employing several workmen. This daily ton gives occasional employment to his mill, and yields an average of twelve and a half marks, equal to one hundred ounces of silver. A mark is worth nine dollars of good coined money in Tegucigalpa. There is



scarcely a mine in Santa Lucia that does not average a mark to the *quintal* of one hundred pounds, even with the present rude method of working.

The native miners who are out of employment haunt the old mines, and by a rude smelting process in earthen pots obtain buttons of crude silver, worth intrinsically a little less than one dollar an ounce. These are every day brought into Tegucigalpa, and exchanged at the *tiendas* for the common necessities of life, at a large discount. This is one source of the silver carried from Balize and San Miguel to London. The mayor-domo of Gatal told me that he estimated the ore of that mine and San Martin to average ten ounces of silver to the *arroba* (or 25 lbs.) of ore. This, however, I think an exaggeration, as it would constitute a yield to the ton which, though some few mines in Honduras have been known to exceed, neither the Santa Lucia nor any other known in that vicinity at present approach.

After packing the specimens on to a mule brought for the purpose, and bidding adieu to the mayor-domo and his little flock of naked workmen, we started back toward Santa Lucia. About a mile distant to the southward, the two peaks of Santa Lucia towered above the neighboring ranges, and there being yet time for the jaunt, I proposed to Don Jose that we should make its ascent, and crown the day's adventures with a look from the summit. He laughed at the idea, and remarked that nobody but savages in the olden time had ever been up there; but, with a little persuading, he agreed, and we turned toward the heights and urged our animals onward.

The path or trail, which led us before through pitch and yellow pine woods, soon became lost in a tangle of brush and shrubbery, and here we sent a man forward to clear the way with a *machete*, and, leaving the other to watch the animals, set forward on foot. The old Don grumbled ominously at this unusual method of proceeding, but scrambling along, and at intervals appealing to a small bottle of the usual Central American stimulus, the party at last reached the plateau.

It would be difficult to describe the superb scene which opened before us. At a height of not less than 5000 feet, and not much below the highest of the Lapaterique range, we stood and

enjoyed perhaps the most extensive prospect in Honduras. The view was bounded to the south and west by the Lapaterique range, forming the eastern side of the valley of Comayagua beyond. Still farther on, the horizon appeared through a depression in these mountains, that of Comayagua before referred to. To the east, from whence came a cool gale, was an apparently interminable labyrinth of mountains, losing themselves in the distance, and the whole seemingly carpeted with green. Northward the eye still encountered hills and valleys like the waves of a troubled sea, but bathed in bright sunshine. Toward Olancho the cones of Guaymaca and Tiupacente were plainly visible. Even Don Jose ceased complaining of his legs, and amused himself with vain efforts to distinguish his house from among the mass of buildings in Tegucigalpa, which lay with its white churches and green palms spread like a map thousands of feet below.

The muttering of thunder warned us that a mountain storm was brewing in the nearest range, and we hastened to regain our mules. It was dark and raining when we regained the city, and with mutual good-nights each clattered over the pavements to his home.

On another occasion I visited, with Señor Lardizabal, the *mineral* of Villa Nueva, or New Town, about six miles from Tegucigalpa. The object of this journey was to view the *Mina de Peña*, or rocky mine, so called from the extreme hardness of the ore, which is a combination of sulphurets and a ferruginous substance, giving it the appearance of red sandstone.

The proprietor has had possession of the mine for some years, and after the first expense, finding he lacked the means to continue to work it, he simply performed enough annually to insure the right of ownership, and has since, like Mr. Micawber, been waiting for something "to turn up" in the shape of a speculative foreigner, with the means and will to prosecute the work.

A streamlet, known as the *Quebrada de Jacaliapa*, flows into the larger river, and affords all the water requisite to supply the works. A rude piece of machinery, designed to be carried by ox-power, stands near the entrance of the mine. Evidences of old workings on an extensive scale yet exist, which have been carried to the depth of forty feet by five or six *esca-*

leras. The vein runs from north to south, and has been opened from three directions, one well-built tunnel running for thirty yards under the hill, and serving the double purpose of *taladro* and *camino*. When Señor Lardizabal reopened and “denounced” the *Mina de Peña*, it had remained partly filled with



TALADRO, OR DRAIN.

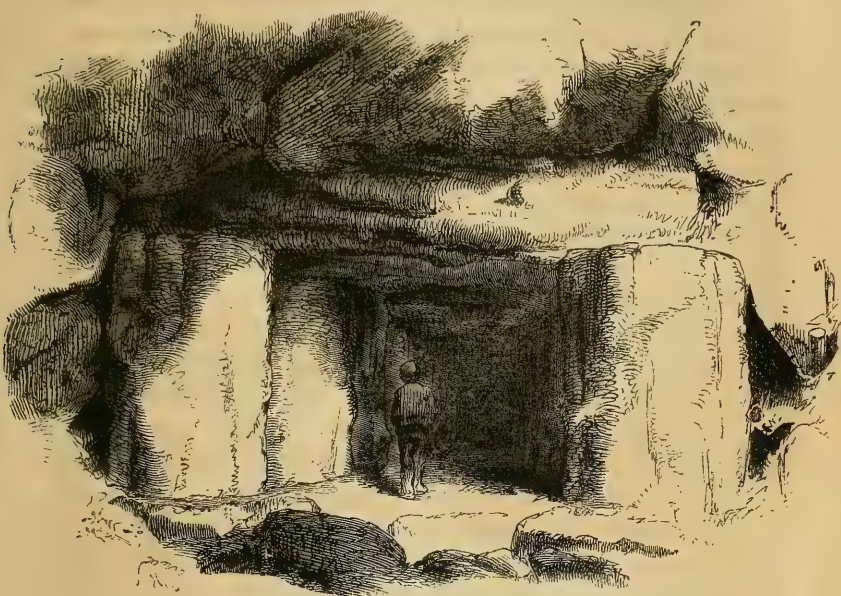


TANATERO—ORE-CARRIER.

rubbish and stones for an unknown number of years, and workmen's implements were found far down in the excavations, as if left there by persons escaping in great haste out of the mine. The proprietor was anxious to form a contract with me, and finally did so, under the belief that *los Americanos* would make his fortune and their own in one year from the commencement of mining operations. The ore assayed in San Francisco at the rate of \$32 75 to the ton, and the value of the mine rests more in the great size of the vein and the abundance of the ore than in its richness.



Near this mine are two or three old deserted ones. That of *la Zopilote* is the resort of those in want of "*monte*" money,



ENTRANCE TO A MINE.

where they attack the old workings, and always succeed in picking out from the stony walls enough to pay them tolerably well for their labor. These gleanings are generally done on Sundays. A group of Indians were at work here as we passed. It was a gloomy cavern in the side of a hill, overhung with aged trees. An old woman with a couple of naked children was boiling a pot over a fire of pine knots. The father of the family, with a bar of iron in his hands, stood at the entrance of the cavern, waiting until we should pass by, and near by I noticed several heaps of ore.

Wishing to see this primitive metallurgist at work, I alighted, and remained a while in the shade, observing the process. A few copper dollars and a word or two of encouragement induced him to recommence for me. He entered the low drift, creeping on his hands and knees, and soon the muffled blows of the bar announced that he was at work upon a mass of ore by the twilight of the mine. In half an hour or less he came out, drag-



ging behind him a sack of about twenty pounds of ore. The man and woman then selected each a flat stone, and gradually reduced the ore to a gravelly dust. The fire, meanwhile, was fed largely by the children. A smaller earthen pot, holding a portion of the *brosa*, was set deep in a bed of coals. The wood was piled over it, sulphureous vapors escaped, and when the whole had burned fiercely a while and fallen to ashes, our son of Tubal Cain drew forth the pot, and turned out upon the ground a mass of gray, black, and red slag and ash, out of which I drew, with a stick, a button of hot silver weighing perhaps an ounce. This I purchased for little more than half its value in the market of Tegucigalpa. These wandering miners form a considerable portion of the country population in the *minerales*, their occupation yielding them a meagre subsistence. With them is said to rest the knowledge of many rich veins in the recesses of the mountains, to which they resort in certain seasons, transmitting the secret through many generations. It is, however, only the best ores that can be treated in such a primitive fashion, and the loss is considerable.

The riches of Tegucigalpa, however, are not confined to the precious metals. Lead in the form of sulphuret is almost too common to attract attention, more especially in the *mineral* of El Plomo, the ores of which are a mixture of lead and silver, the former in so large a proportion as to make them unprofitable by the native methods of working.

The hill called "El Chimbo," a few leagues southwest of Tegucigalpa, is a curious mixture of copper dust with the soil. The surface must have been once a solid rock of copper pyrites (sulphuret), now decayed and converted into a blue rotten-stone. By turning up the sod, *copper earth*, in lumps like potters' clay, is revealed. From a quantity of this clay, which was crushed and panned after the method of gold-washing, there remained in the bottom dozens of glittering specks of pure copper. Thousands of tons of this may be easily obtained, and a perpetual stream flows near by to facilitate the working of it.

A few weeks before leaving Tegucigalpa I was introduced to an old English naval officer, Captain Moore, who had once commanded his frigate, but had now retired on half-pay, and for fourteen years has been engaged in working silver mines in Cen-

tral America. His bright blue eye and energetic gestures denoted an activity and health hardly to be expected from his advanced age and snow-white hair and beard. He had lately imported from England a costly steam-engine, purchased with the proceeds of his mining operations in the vicinity of Yuscaran, where he employed fifty men at a *real* ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents) per day, and was at last realizing a rapid fortune. The natives, with whom he is generally popular, call him *el Capitan Morey*. He had expended, he said, two months of time in procuring the requisite papers for landing his machinery, and, by some mistake, ran a narrow chance of its confiscation by the government. Captain Moore spoke of Dunlop, author of "Travels in Central America," with whom he had several agreeable interviews in 1846. Dunlop refers to him as the only stranger who had then attempted working the silver mines of Central America. Of some of the mines in Honduras the most wonderful stories are recounted, many of which would form the basis of legends similar to those relating to the famous Lake of Parima, "El Dorado," or the search for the golden city. The most celebrated mines in the state, most of which have now fallen to decay, are those of Guayabilla, Malacate, Mairena, Coloal, Tabanco, Gatal, El Plomo, Opeteca, Cuyal, San Martin, Caridad, and El Corpus. Of the last mentioned, which was situated in the Department of Tegucigalpa, Juarros says, "El Corpus was the richest mine in the kingdom. It produced gold in so great a quantity as to excite a suspicion as to the reality of the metal, and a treasurer was established on the spot for the sole purpose of receiving the king's fifths." These twelve, which are brilliant examples of the mining wealth of the state, are each the subject of endless stories, to relate which would require a sizable volume.

Of the old mining traditions, the least partaking of the fabulous is perhaps that relating to the celebrated Guayabilla, or Wild Guava, still asserted by the old people to have been the richest silver mine ever known in Central America. My old friend, Señor Losano, who loved nothing better than a comfortable hammock and a good listener, often referred to this mine, and I heard his accounts corroborated by many others.

The mine is situated within the mineral of Yuscaran, and was discovered in 1771 by a *vaquero*, Juan Calvo, who, in clamber-

ing up a rocky steep, dislocated a huge boulder, which, crashing down the mountain, plowed up the earth, and revealed to his wondering gaze filaments of silver, spreading among the interstices of the rocks like delicate fibrous roots. He had discernment enough to know that his discovery, if made public, would prove of little benefit to him, even though he denounced it; and informing himself thoroughly of the method then pursued by the proprietors of silver mines, he smelted with an iron pot large sums of silver, with scarcely an attempt to follow the vein into the mountain. "But," said the narrator, "this sudden prosperity was too much for Juan Calvo." Vanity getting the better of his prudence, he one day let fall at a *fiesta* certain words that excited the attention of his companions, who had long been jealous of his jaunty dress, lofty airs, and profusion of gambling-money. He was followed, and the secret discovered. It soon passed by purchase or otherwise into the hands of the rich Arjenal family, who at once commenced working it. That immense amounts of silver were extracted from the mine for many successive years, tradition and the rapid settlement of the country in the vicinity immediately after its discovery testify; but to credit that "\$12,000,000 *were taken out in fifty years*" is hardly possible. Yet its subsequent history, and the vast sums known to have been extracted after it commenced to be worked a second time, would almost warrant the belief in any statement, however prodigious.

It is asserted that the Arjenals, after the Independence, returned, with other loyal families, to Spain, and that their estates were confiscated, or allowed to fall to decay. The Central American Revolution, however, was a bloodless one, and there was no reason for those families who remained loyal to the crown to fear violence from the people. It was not until 1838 that Mr. Bennett, an English capitalist, succeeded with his associates in getting partial possession of the Guayabilla mine. At that time the galleries and adits were mostly choked up with earth and rubbish, to remove which a large investment was necessary. The enterprise was conducted on a plan commensurate with the reported wealth of the mine.

A company of Cornwall miners were brought from England, some of the descendants of whom are yet in Honduras; scien-

tific persons were engaged in the service of the association, and the mine reopened, after a year's unremunerative labor, under the best native and foreign auspices in Honduras. It would be difficult to estimate, from that period, the extraordinary yield of the mine. About twenty persons are now living in Tegucigalpa who owned small shares in the enterprise, and from them I heard accounts of the *weekly dividends* of its proceeds. The ore, said to be the richest ever known in Honduras, was found coated with virgin silver as when discovered more than half a century before. The smelting was done in immense ovens constructed near the works. The government, partially interested in the enterprise, favored the operations. The associates, both native and foreign, became rich. Accounts of the "good old Guayabilla days" are yet circulated in Honduras, and the ancient reputation of the mine, which had been regarded as fabulous, was re-established. Large amounts of silver are said to have been shipped *via* Balize to England, where the fame of the mine soon became known. The workmen are represented to have been paid off in long lines, the operation occupying from noon until dark every Saturday. Here was a forcible illustration of the value of foreign capital, labor, and skill in Honduras. "But," continued my informant, "the *fatalidad del pais* could not brook such an anomaly in the history of Honduras. Ferrera, the murderous instrument of the aristocratic faction, was elected by fraud to the presidency; property was confiscated; rich men murdered or driven away; all respectable and honest people banished; all affairs reversed and ruined."

A gentleman of Guatemala, a large owner in the Guayabilla, dying, the property went into the hands of his brother, a cunning lawyer of the lowest character in the party of Ferrera. Hitherto the Guayabilla had been comparatively exempt from the outrages of the Servile faction: this was owing to the influence of foreigners, especially Englishmen, and some members of the Servile party who were interested in the property. The lawyer of Guatemala, Don Felipe Jaureyui, defrauded the heirs of his brother; and knowing that, at the close of Ferrera's administration, he would be compelled to restore the property, he resolved meanwhile to make the best of it.

One of the sections of the *Ordinanzas de la Minería* pro-



hibits the removal of those natural columns of rock and ore which support the roof and arches of a mine. In the Guayabilla mine they were found as left by the old proprietors—of solid ore and of immense value. A bribe from the rich Jaureyui induced Ferrera and a majority in the *Camaras* to repeal this time-honored ordinance. Others of the owners, won over by the specious arguments of the wily lawyer, agreed; the pillars were taken down, and in four months are said to have yielded half a million in pure silver, but the next rainy season the roofs fell in and the mine was ruined. The long galleries became choked with stones, timber, and mud; the machinery went to wreck; and the foreign proprietors, after expostulating in vain with Ferrera, abandoned the enterprise in despair. Ten thousand dollars would be required to reopen the Guayabilla from a new point, but there are many who assert that the speculation would prove a good one, as the mine was yielding largely when destroyed by the rapacious Jaureyui.

The arrival of the long-expected documents, with flattering letters from President Cabañas and Señor Cacho, enabled me to complete my preparations. After a formal “*adios*” to my friends, who had ridden out of the city with me to the foot of the Lapaterique range, I took the path or *camino real* leading over the mountains to the Pacific, and, with the usual delays and peculiar adventures of Central American travel, arrived at Choluteca. From here, after a detention of four days, and bidding adieu to my faithful Roberto, who begged hard to go with me to *el Norte*, I reached Amapala, and renewed a cordial intimacy with my hospitable friend, Señor Dardano.

Here the rumor of Walker’s contemplated enlistment with a few followers in the Castellon cause had created some anxiety. Mr. Byron Cole, my companion from San Francisco to Leon, arrived on the following day, and the adventures of both were quickly exchanged. Neither had heard from the other since parting at Leon the previous year. All letters miscarrying, and the lazy life of Nicaragua not suiting my energetic friend, he had enlisted his sympathies with the Democratic cause, had gone back to San Francisco with his own written contracts, signed and sealed by the government, engaging the co-operation of the second Miranda, and, returning to Nicaragua, was

now calmly awaiting the firing of the train he had so skillfully laid.

Meanwhile Chamorro, closely besieged in Granada, still held out against the Castellon forces, while the people, wearied with the protracted war, were ready to side with either party most likely to terminate it. Masaya, Managua, and Rivas, with all Southern Nicaragua, had been retaken by the *Legitimistas*, or adherents of Chamorro. Honduras, assailed by Guatemala, had withdrawn her troops from Nicaragua to protect her eastern frontier. San Salvador and Costa Rica were acting temporarily the part of pacificators; and Guatemala, friendly to the Chamorro cause, but occupied with her usual invasion of Honduras, contented herself with keeping spies in Leon, and affording all possible secret aid to the Serviles. Such was the political aspect of Central America in the summer of 1855.

The only communication between the Bay of Fonseca and the south coast was by a few antiquated launches, dignified with the name of schooners, and offering perhaps a semi-monthly chance to go by sea from port to port. An open boat, with one sorry, threadbare sail, was at last announced for San Juan del Sur, for a passage in which the proprietor asked the moderate sum of \$50, payable in advance. We set sail at sundown, took the young flood, and swept swiftly out of the noble harbor, past Mianguera and the great headlands of Conchagua and Consiguina, standing like the Pillars of Hercules to guard the entrance to the finest harbor on the North Pacific coast. A bright moon illumined the distant peaks, and tipped with silver the surf breaking over the lonely Farrallones. The land-breeze bore us swiftly away to the southward, and at daylight only the higher volcanic peaks were in sight. El Tigre, up whose steep ascent we had lately scrambled to the very apex—a plateau of lava and mould crowned with luxuriant grass—now loomed dim in the horizon. Three thousand feet above the ocean it towers, and from seaward affords an unfailing landmark to the mariner.

For three days we beat against a strong southwest wind, when the ancient craft commenced to leak at such a rate that the *patron* (a bongo sailor, who now made his first trip to sea) clapped his helm up and made for Realejo, where two days more

were expended in repairing. Here my crew gravely informed me that the boat was unseaworthy, and the voyage consequently at an end. A dispute ensued, which was finally carried before the *commandante* of the port, who first ascertained my politics, which were, of course, strongly Castellon. This declaration, backed by a quarter doubloon, decided the case in my favor, and Pedro was forced to refund three fourths of the passage-money.

Another launch was engaged, and at night, in the good launch "Live Yankee," Captain "Sam," the voyage was continued. Two days more we beat along the Nicaraguan coast, losing on one tack all we gained on the other, until a favorable breeze gave us a slant into the roadstead of San Juan del Sur. As we rounded a headland, the inspiring spectacle appeared of an ocean steam-ship (the Uncle Sam), wearing the American flag, riding at her anchors, ready fired up, and receiving the last of her New York passengers before weighing anchor for San Francisco. I question if I ever gazed on the red, white, and blue with greater satisfaction.


In another hour I was comfortably located on board, with the courteous Captain Blethen "bringing up the news." My latest New York paper was five months old. Those in the steamer were but fourteen days. Soon the ponderous machinery began to move, and, with a parting signal-gun, we sped bravely away.

Once among old friends, it was with genuine regret that I recalled the images of a strange and decadent people, and a country of rare and yet unknown beauties. The delicate tracery of the *laines* and parasites, the brilliancy and variety of the landscapes, the bracing air of the upland plateaus, the skies of immaculate blue, and the imperial sunsets, all came dreamily back as we steamed past purpling mountains and dark belts of forest. Wild or ludicrous adventures, tender fancies, luxurious laziness, and drowsy speculations through inductive courses of *siestas*, *cigarros*, and fragrant *chocolate*, were fast fading into visions of the past as we plowed boldly toward the more vigorous and progressive North.

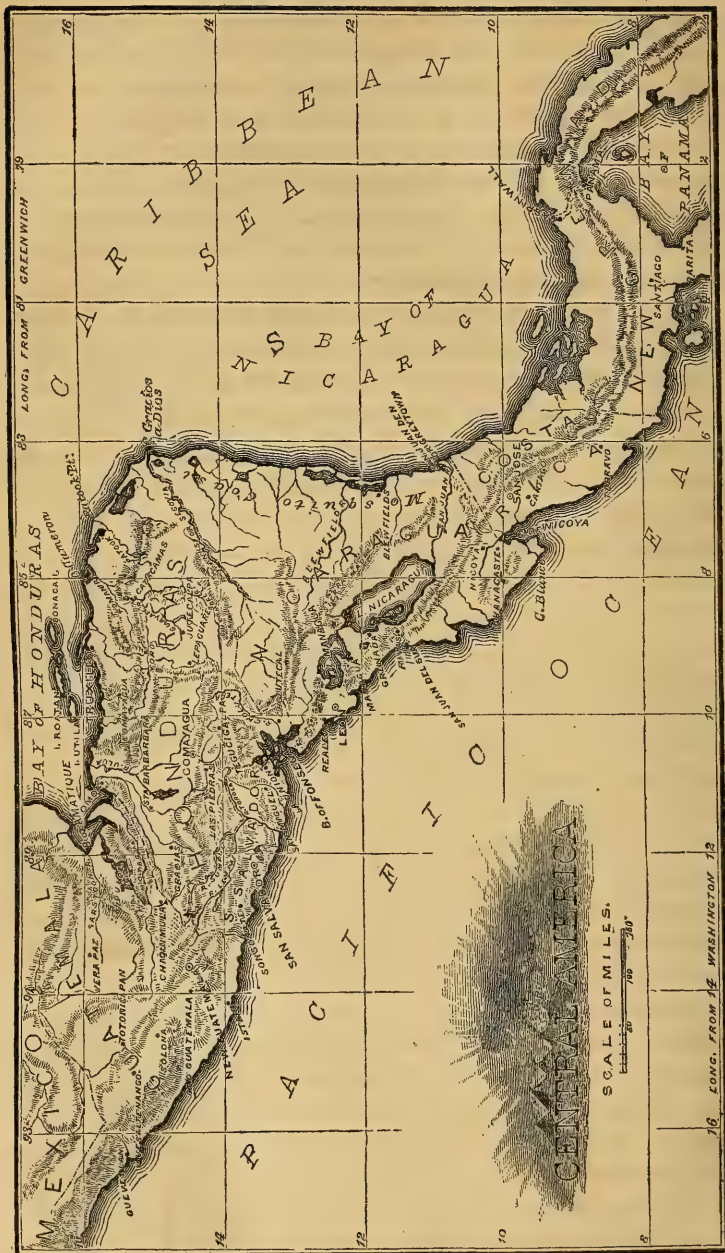
The activity displayed in every department on board an ocean steam-ship can at no time be better appreciated than on thus

suddenly quitting a Spanish-American country, where to think, talk, or move fast is an exception to the rule of hopeless lethargy and laziness. There is something inspiring in the hurry of the waiters, and the brisk routine of hourly duty. To step from Central America into an American steamer was like awaking from a long dream. Here all was life—action. Men quarreled with energy, and laughed aloud. There seemed more intelligence within speaking distance than in the whole snail-paced race I had lately moved among.

In less time than I had taken to hunt up mules in Nacaome for a thirty-league ride, we had plowed through sixteen hundred miles of ocean, and were now entering the noble harbor of San Francisco—past Point Lobos, through the Golden Gate, and safely moored at the wharf. It was HOME!







## CHAPTER XXIV.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CENTRAL AMERICA. 1502-1821.

Aboriginal Inhabitants of Honduras.—Columbus first lands on the American Continent.—Early Settlement of the Coast.—Exploration and Settlement of the Interior.—Cortez at Truxillo.—Expeditions into Olancho.—Subjugation of the Indians.—Missionary Expeditions into Olancho and Segovia.—Establishment of Spanish Sovereignty.—The Colonial System of Spain.—Causes of the Central American Revolution.—Declaration of Independence.

THE early history of few portions of Spanish America carries a deeper interest, or is more shrouded in oblivion, than that of the region extending from Tehuantepec to Panama, including the whole of the old kingdom of Guatemala, and now known as Central America. Its conquest, though emblazoned with adventures as notable as those marking the fall of Montezuma and the Incas, has yet to be placed in minute detail in the pages of modern historians.

A century before the advent of the Pilgrim fathers upon the bleak shores of New England, an adventurous people had overrun a vast portion of the New World, penetrating its forests, subjugating its inhabitants, and sending to Europe galleon-loads of treasure as earnest of its boundless wealth. The motive of one race was the purchase at any price of religious freedom; of the other, the acquisition of territory and the lust of gold. One, stripped of their former splendor and power, have fallen to decay; the other, with rapid but healthful growth, already spans the continent, and, limited by the Pacific, gazes impatiently toward the plains of the tropical south. Retributive justice has overtaken the race who, in the pursuit of gold, perpetrated enormities of cruelty unparalleled in history. Their heritage is in turn passing away, the natural prey of more progressive and energetic competitors.

The accounts of the Spanish chroniclers, as well as numerous interesting aboriginal ruins, denote Honduras to have been inhabited at the date of the discovery by a people not lacking in

the arts of civilization, and in numbers which entitled the country to rank among the most populous of the New World. The histories of Bernal Diaz, Las Casas, Herrera, Fuentes, Vasquez, and, more recently, of Juarros, the historian of Guatemala, throw ample light upon the achievement of the conquerors. From these sources it appears that the aborigines possessed the courage and skill to wage a determined war against their invaders, which, though of short duration, lasted until the superior arms and skill of the Spaniards brought them gradually to subjection.

Honduras claims the distinction of having been the first place of debarkation of Columbus on the American continent. Here, on his fourth voyage, he landed at Point Casinas, on the 14th of August, 1502. He had previously discovered the island of Guanaja (now Bonaca, one of the "Bay Islands"), where Bartolome Columbus had landed with a party of Spaniards. Pursuing his voyage to the eastward from Point Casinas (now Cape Honduras), Columbus made a headland stretching into the sea, where, for some time, he contended with currents and adverse winds, until, rounding the point, the sailors thanked God, whence it derived its appellation of "*Gracias á Dios*."

At Guanaja the admiral was visited by a number of the inhabitants of the continent. They came in a canoe of great length and eight feet wide, ingeniously constructed, and appeared to be a people much farther advanced in the civilized arts than any he had yet discovered. Some wore massive ornaments of gold, and replied to the eager inquiries of the Spaniards by pointing to the main land, where they said it was found in such quantities as to be used for the commonest purposes. Farther to the southward, the natives wore plates of gold as ornaments. The main land, however, was not settled until 1509, when Alonso de Ojeda, on his third voyage, and Diego de Nicuessa, under the encouragement of Ferdinand, formed two settlements, one of which, extending from Darien to Cape Gracias á Dios, was placed under the government of Nicuessa.

In 1523 Cristoval de Oli, having been commissioned by Cortez, landed in Honduras at a point not far from Omoa, which he called the Bay of the "Triumph of the Cross." He was preceded, however, by Gil Gonzales de Avila, the discoverer of the Bay of Fonseca, who had previously effected a landing on the

Gulf of Dulce, having been unable, owing to the bad weather, to enter Puerto Caballos, near which he was obliged to throw overboard some horses—whence the name. Juarros states from Herrera that the coast had at once the names of “Las Hibue-ras,” from the great number of calabashes seen floating in the vicinity; “Guaimura,” from a village so called; and “Hondura” (depth), a name given by the Spaniards, who were prevented for some time from landing, owing to the great depth of water along the coast.

Oli having revolted from the authority of Cortez, that commander sent Francisco de Las Casas from Mexico against him, with two ships well armed. A naval engagement took place in the bay between the fleets of the two captains, which resulted in the defeat of Oli, one of whose vessels was sunk; but a gale arising at the moment of victory, the vessels of Las Casas foundered; forty of his men were drowned, and the rest saved themselves by swimming to the shore. The survivors requited Oli’s kind treatment by treacherously murdering him the first opportunity. These events left Las Casas in possession of the country. In the following year (1524) he founded the city of Truxillo.

Although Gonzales, in 1522, had discovered the Pacific coast of Honduras, on his expedition in search of a passage from the South Sea to the Atlantic, he does not appear to have penetrated into the interior. The earliest settlement recorded is that of San Jorge de Olanchito, by Diego de Alvarado, sent by his brother Pedro, in 1530, to colonize the province of Tecultran, or Eastern Honduras. This town, however, as is denoted by its name, was founded subsequent to many excursions made into the interior of Olancho by the Spaniards during Cortez’s residence at Truxillo in 1526. Bernal Diaz relates that, after the conquest of the Indians residing near Truxillo, the name of Cortez was so feared and respected among all the inhabitants of this country “that even the distant tribes of Olancho, where subsequently so many lucrative mines were discovered, sent ambassadors to him to declare themselves vassals of our emperor.” But the interior of Olancho had been visited even before this date by Captain Gabriel Rojas, who was sent by Pedro Arias to explore the gold mines of the country. The same adventurer



effected a settlement at Cape Gracias á Dios in 1530, which was soon after abandoned.

Cortez, meantime, obtaining no tidings from Las Casas, had performed his celebrated march from Chiapas through the unknown wilderness of Guatemala to Honduras, an achievement unparalleled in martial history for the sufferings, difficulties, and privations successfully encountered by its projector. On his arrival he directed important changes in the settlements, and founded the town of Natividad at Puerto Caballos.

During the stay of Cortez at Truxillo, frequent communication was doubtless had between the port and the interior. The powerful tribes in the vicinity were reduced, and their chiefs brought to Truxillo and made to understand the power of Spain. Some, residing in what is now known as Yoro, were employed in laborious work in the town, and the caciques required to negotiate with the adjacent islanders for provisions for their conquerors. A number of Indians, says Bernal Diaz, had journeyed all the way to Truxillo, bearing complaints to Cortez of the Spaniards of Nicaragua, who had committed depredations on their country, plundering them, and carrying away their wives and daughters. Gonzales de Sandoval was dispatched with only sixty men into the interior, where Rojas was saved from punishment by the mediation of several cavaliers, who restored friendship between the two commanders. The historian states that Sandoval penetrated six hundred miles into the country, the impossibility of which is shown by the fact that much less than that distance would more than have sufficed to carry him quite across the continent.

Herrera devotes part of his fourth book to a description of the religion and customs of the natives inhabiting the present departments of Yoro and Olancho. That the country was populous is shown by his reference to the River Haguaro (Aguan?), a large and pleasant stream running toward Truxillo, on the banks of which were large towns, whose people irrigated much land.

About the time of Cortez's final departure from Truxillo in 1526, expeditions from Naco, near Puerto Caballos, had been made into Olancho. "We had already fought our way," says Bernal Diaz, "through hostile tribes up to Olancho, which at

present is called Guayape, abounding in lucrative gold mines." The continued discovery of gold mines in Olancho and Yoro (the latter then known as Santa Cruz del Oro—the *Holy Cross of Gold*) brought a numerous population into that part of Honduras, many of whom, charmed with its climate and picturesque scenery, renounced the occupation of miners, and, commencing with small stocks imported from Spain, gave the first impulse to the subsequent pastoral employment of the people. The leading branch of industry, however, for many years, was gold mining, vigorously pursued with the rude methods then in vogue. An English writer in 1661, describing the province of Honduras, says, "Twenty-seven leagues from this city (Truxillo) lies the village of San Jorje de Olancho, where four thousand Spaniards force tribute from sixteen thousand Indians, who possess much gold."

From the arrival of Pedro de Alvarado with the royal commission of Governor and Captain General of Guatemala, the subjugation of the natives was continued with the most inhuman cruelties. The local commanders, exercising unlimited control over the Indians, stopped at no barbarities in extorting from them the supposed hiding-places of their gold. A stubborn resistance was made in Honduras, but particularly in Guatemala proper, where the aborigines were led to battle in vast hosts, but only to be slaughtered in heaps by their dauntless, mail-cased enemies.

Montejo, who had been appointed Governor of Honduras by the King of Spain in 1536, on his arrival from Mexico dispatched Alonzo de Carceres, one of his officers, against the Cacique Lempira (lord of the mountain). This chieftain had collected an army of thirty thousand men, whom he animated with stirring appeals and assurances of victory. He fortified a rock at Cerquin, near the present city of Comayagua, and for six months bid defiance to the Spaniards, who were obliged to winter in the field with great suffering. Lempira haughtily rejected all offers of peace, and put to death the messengers of Carceres, declaring that he would own no superior, nor admit of any innovations in the customs and religion of the country. He was of middle stature, broad-shouldered, brave, and prudent. His influence over the Indians was so great that he was said by them to be

enchanted, and fabulous accounts of his personal prowess were current among all the tribes, where he was held in extreme awe and respect. He was at length treacherously shot by order of Carceres, during a parley, in which he stood exposed upon the ramparts of his fort. His body was found incased in the peculiar cotton armor used by the Spaniards in the Indian wars. After his death the natives surrendered to the authority of the conquerors.

The Cacique Tapica was another brave and powerful chieftain, exercising great influence over the tribes of the interior, whom he urged to effect a general union against the invaders, but unsuccessfully. The Spaniards found the natives divided against themselves, and thus falling the surer and easier prey to their enemies.

Forty thousand men would assemble to fight a battle, some of them armed with bows and arrows, pointed with sharp flints. Their shields were constructed of reeds, artificially woven together, and covered with the skins of lions, tigers, deer, and other wild animals; the martial ornaments of the skins of birds and beasts. Their swords were made of poisonous hard wood.\*

The historian Juarros, who refers to the conquest of these aboriginal tribes, is silent regarding the multitudes barbarously put to death during the work of subjugation. Bartolome de Las Casas, who visited Guatemala in 1536, was unwearied in his attempts to convert the natives to the Christian faith, and succeeded by gentleness in subduing tribes who had defied the most chivalrous exploits of the soldiers. He did not confine his humane efforts to Guatemala, but interested himself in behalf of Honduras.

In his letter to Charles V. he gives us some insight into the enormities practiced by the Spaniards, and the vast population in the days of the conquerors; but, in the latter respect, allowance should be made for the zealous exaggeration of the good bishop. Of the conquerors he says, "They murdered young children, beating out their brains against stones. The kings and princes of the country they either scorched to death or threw them to the dogs to be torn to pieces. The poor people

\* Herrera, book iv., chap. i.; book vi., chap. iv.

they drove into their houses, and then set them on fire. Those that remained were condemned to the worst slavery imaginable, being used instead of mules and horses, forced to carry burdens far beyond their strength, and thousands fell dead under their loads. Some ran into the woods, and starved after having eaten their wives and children. In this province alone they massacred above twenty hundred thousand men, among others persons of quality who had civilly entertained them. They tortured the poor innocent natives in every way they could invent to force them to discover their gold. Particularly Diego de Velasco spared none that ever fell into his hands; so that, in a month's time, above ten thousand were slain by him. He hanged thirteen chiefs, to whom he gave the name of the twelve apostles, naming the principal one Jesus Christ. Some they suffered to starve to death, with their heads fastened between the cloven barks of wild vines; some they buried alive, and, leaving only their heads above ground, bowled iron shot at them, and forced them to eat one another, and infinite other hellish cruelties too horrible to be recounted."

The tyrannical rule of Governor Cerceda in 1536 was such that the Indians, upon whose agricultural labors the colonists had mainly depended, fled into the mountains, leaving the settlers in the greatest distress. The arrival of Alvarado terminated these troubles. The Indians were pacified, and the guilty governor was held answerable for his conduct. While here, Alvarado founded the towns of San Juan and San Pedro Zula. In the same year efforts were made to explore and settle the interior. By the death of the Cacique Lempira quiet was restored, and Alonzo de Caceres was commissioned to discover an eligible situation for a town midway between the two oceans. He selected the site of the present city of Comayagua. It was intended, says Juarros, by means of this place to obtain an easy communication with the Atlantic and Pacific; its situation, being about half way between Puerto Caballos and the Bay of Fonseca, would render it a convenient intermediate dépôt. The climate being healthy, and the soil fertile, much of the sickness and waste of human life would be prevented, and many of the fatigues and privations avoided usually experienced in the journey from *Nombre de Dios* (Chagres) to Panama. The King of



Spain commissioned an Italian engineer, Bautista Antonelli, to survey this proposed route, which, three hundred years later, has been selected by Anglo-Saxons for the line of an inter-oceanic rail-road communication.\* The historian states 1542 as the year in which Comayagua (then called Nueva Valladolid) was founded. It soon became the capital of the province, a position it has since continued to hold.

The settlement of Honduras appears to have been prosecuted earnestly by the Spaniards during the greater part of this century. Many of the most advantageously situated Indian villages grew into brisk trading towns. The natives gradually fell into a state of vassalage or servitude, more wretched, if possible, than professed slavery. It can not be denied that the laws of the Indies were conceived and intended to be administered in justice and wisdom, especially those regulating the government of the Indians; but these, though framed in the spirit of humanity, were craftily evaded by the Spaniards, who, oppressed as colonists by the mother country, in their turn abused and harassed the unresisting natives. Negro slavery was introduced only when the system of refined cruelty had nearly extinguished the Indian race.

The city of Truxillo, as the outlet of the produce of Olancho and Yoro, became, after some years, a centre of commerce. In 1539 its church was declared a cathedral by Pope Pius III., which title it continued to hold for above twenty years, until removed to Comayagua. A fort mounting seventeen guns was built in the same year. The place was frequently attacked, and once, in 1643, entirely destroyed by the Dutch pirate John Van Horne. Among the valuable articles obtained as booty in the English and Dutch marauding expeditions against Honduras are enumerated silver, skins, indigo, and sarsaparilla. In 1661, the English geographer Ogilby, describing Truxillo, says, "The country round about abounds chiefly in grapes, which are gathered twice a year. Eight days after August they cut their vines, which afford them ripe grapes again in October." In 1789 the town was rebuilt by royal edict, and in 1797 repulsed an English fleet which attacked it. Juarros represents it in 1811 as having but four hundred inhabitants, of whom

\* Proposed Honduras Inter-oceanic Rail-road.

three quarters were blacks. At present it is an obscure, unfrequented port. San Fernando de Omoa, with its castle, was built in consequence of a royal decree, dated in 1740. The works were twenty-three years in process of construction. The present limited trade of these ports is elsewhere described.

The missionary expeditions sent early in the 17th century into the interior of Olancho and Segovia by the way of Comayagua, though conceived and executed with laudable intentions, possess little interest beyond exhibiting the condition of the native tribes of that date and the indomitable zeal of the Catholic ministers. As early as 1547 information had been sent to Spain concerning the tribes of Eastern Honduras, then known in connection with the adjoining region of Nicaragua as Taguzgalpa and Tologalpa. In 1594, Philip II. commanded that a minute statement be made of the tribes inhabiting the northern coasts and transmitted to the court. About the same time two friars endeavored unsuccessfully to penetrate into the interior of these provinces. The first successful attempt to carry the Christian faith among the "infidel Indians" appears to have been made in 1606 by the padres Estevan Verdelete and Juan Montea-gudo, who left Comayagua with the design of reaching the powerful tribes of the Xicaques by the river of New Segovia, or Wanks. They were deserted by their Indian guides in a pathless wilderness, and after incredible perils, marking their way by means of the stars through wilds and over precipices, they escaped and arrived safely at Comayagua.

Three years afterward the two padres repeated the attempt. In 1609 they formed a company of thirty-four, among whom were the curate of Olancho, Captain Daza, and three other natives of Olancho. They entered the mountain district by the River Guayape, and after crossing many rivers by rafts and canoes, they came in sight of the huts of the natives. They probably struck the Guayape at the foot of the Campamento Mountains, and, traveling eastward toward Tiupacente, passed the Jalin, Guayambre, and other rivers in that region.

The Indians were doubtless portions of the Toacas tribe, mentioned by Juarros as inhabiting that part of the country. They advanced to meet the strangers, greeting them with dances and flowers. The appearance of some, who were painted black

and wore plumes of feathers on their heads, caused the padres to doubt their peaceable disposition. A large cross was erected, and so many natives baptized that Verdelete sent back an account of his success to Guatemala. But the Lencas and Mexicans, living together, quarreled, and, seduced by those who had refused to be converted, they, with the Teguacas, decamped into the mountains, after which the savages, with blackened faces and horrid yells, and armed with torches and lances, set fire to the hut which had been erected as a church. Verdelete, crucifix in hand, expostulated and exhorted in vain; and, finding the dwelling-places utterly deserted, the party returned to Guatemala.

In 1610 the missionaries again essayed the conversion of the Xicaques. The party was escorted by Captain Alonzo Daza, with twenty-five soldiers. Verdelete preached a farewell sermon at Guatemala, in which he prophesied to his hearers that they were listening to him for the last time. The company reached the confines of Tologalpa in 1611.

On their arrival the party was attacked by the natives, and some of the soldiers were killed. After some time spent in observations, Daza set forward with a few soldiers without arms, to effect a peaceable reconciliation with the Indians. On leaving, he recommended the missionaries not to move from their present situation without receiving a letter from him. But, heedless of this advice, they were decoyed by the natives into canoes, and after proceeding some distance on the river, came to a point of land where, on the declivity of a hill, were a multitude of Indians painted black, with helmets of feathers, and armed with lances. The head of the murdered Daza and the hands of his soldiers were elevated upon spears. Despite this terrible spectacle, Verdelete landed and advanced boldly toward the savages, who, at a concerted signal, rushed upon the party, killing both the missionaries and nearly all the escort.

The barbarians celebrated their triumph by a feast, at which they devoured their victims, making use of their skulls for drinking-cups. Their vestments were used in the dance, and the chalices and other holy utensils broken to pieces and made into nose and ear pendants. The chronicler states that many died of their excesses on this occasion; some were dashed to

pieces over precipices, and several were drowned, as a mark of Almighty vengeance for these sacrileges. At least, he adds, such was the information given by the Indians to a missionary who in after times visited the country. The death of Verdelete occurred in January, 1612.

For many years the Indians of Tologalpa saw nothing more of the Christians, but toward the close of the 17th century other attempts were made, and missionary establishments formed in Segovia, all of which were eventually abandoned. Efforts were made to convert the Indians of Olancho shortly after the martyrdom of Verdelete. A young Andalusian, accompanied by a lay brother, and four Ruatan Indians as interpreters, landed at Cape Gracias á Dios in 1622. They wandered for two days in a wild country bearing no traces of humanity; occasionally, however, they descried natives at a distance, who, on perceiving the strangers, fled in consternation. They at last encountered the Indians in a procession, the description of which and the subsequent narration of the patriarchal chief of the tribe indicates the love of the marvelous characterizing the accounts of the Spanish missionaries. The padres were kindly received, and the work of Christianizing was conducted with the greatest ardor. Martinez and two companions were murdered in 1623 by the Albatuinas, a tribe inhabiting the interior of Olancho. The Guabas, another nation, are described as mulattoes, and the progeny of a party of Spaniards who had been wrecked on the coast. The missionary labors were gradually discontinued. In 1661 the Poyas tribe made a descent upon the valley of Olancho, but were soon reduced by Escoto, a landed proprietor, and a military party raised for the purpose. The Padre Goicoechea renewed the attempts to civilize the Xicaques as late as 1805. He passed the mountain and valley of Agalteca, and founded the villages of Pacura and San Estevan (named after the martyr Verdelete), and now known as "*Conquistas*." All traces of the cannibalism attributed to these Indians by Fernando Columbus and by the missionaries has long since disappeared.

With the conquest of the Indian tribes within fifteen years after the landing of Cristoval de Oli, Honduras was erected into a province of the kingdom of Guatemala, under the *Nueva*



*Audiencia* established at Comayagua. Far removed from the mother country, Guatemala received no protection, and scarcely any assistance from Spain save the necessary regulating of its revenues and offices by the "Council of the Indies," and the collecting of the king's fifths of the proceeds of the mines. As in Mexico and Peru, the principal industry was that of gold and silver mining, begetting, particularly in Honduras, a distaste for agricultural pursuits, except in the great plains and valleys, where considerable quantities of tropical produce were cultivated for export. The raising of cattle soon assumed an importance only second to mining. The European wars, in which Spain was engaged during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, subjected the coast to occasional attack and to the incursions of buccaneers, to whom the adjacent West India islands offered convenient places of retreat and rendezvous for the division of booty. With these few exceptions, the most profound tranquillity reigned in the Guatemalan provinces. The Spanish military, consisting of a handful of troops quartered in Guatemala, scarcely merited the appellation of an army. The Catholic religion extended exclusively throughout the country; the Church establishment, under the guidance of the Archbishop of Guatemala, was divided into bishoprics, curacies, and parishes, reaching in hundreds of ramifications to the remotest confines of civilization.

To trace the history of Guatemala from the period of the Conquest to the Independence would be inconsistent with the brevity of this sketch. The system of colonial government by which Spain, from a great distance, ruled equably and successfully, for nearly three centuries, vast continents with many millions of inhabitants, must ever excite the admiration of the world. Countries entirely dissimilar in climate, productions, and people, moved with equal regularity in one political orbit, guided by its harmonizing influence. The Guatemalan provinces formed a galaxy under the sway of this wonderful system, and existed, as has been observed, in absolute tranquillity.

The charge of maintaining the Spanish authority was intrusted to officers enjoying salaries and honors almost rivaling actual sovereignty, under the title of viceroys and captains-general. Guatemala became a *capitaneria*, into six of which,

and four viceroyalties, Spanish America was divided. The administration of justice was confided to *audiencias*, one of which, as has already been stated, was established by royal decree at Comayagua in 1543. This political and civil organization underwent few if any changes during the centuries of Spanish sway in Guatemala. The provinces were subsequently represented at the court of Madrid by viceregal deputies.

In Spain existed throughout this era the celebrated convention known as the "Council of the Indies," which, established as early as 1511, continued thereafter to exercise its authority over the affairs of the provinces. It was also a supreme court of appeals from the decisions of the *audiencias*. Composed of learned, sagacious men, well versed in the requirements and peculiar position of the colonies, this body was regarded by the people with the most sincere veneration. It professed to reward chivalrous deeds, to punish delinquents, and redress wrongs. Its powers were as absolute as they were extensive. In its gift were the principal civil and ecclesiastical colonial offices, and its influence mainly guided the military as well as financial and commercial affairs of Spanish America. But even so potent an arm of protection, apparently stretched in friendly attitude toward the colonies, offered in reality no succor to the oppressed Indian tribes, who gradually but surely were fading before their pitiless task-masters; and even the Spanish inhabitants were but seldom enabled to gain the ear of the council, surrounded as it was with disheartening formalities.

The system of finances was founded on the principles, 1st, that the king was the proprietor of the lands; 2d, the payment by the Indians of a contribution or capitation; 3d, a tenth part of the produce of the land was paid under the denomination of tithes, which were levied for the protection of the king, and granted to the churches under the sanction of different popes; 4th, the indirect taxes, or customs; the *alcabala*, or duty paid on selling most articles of commerce or provisions, and the fifth (quinto) of all gold and silver extracted from the mines not belonging to the king. The sale of tobacco, salt, cards, and some other less important articles, was confined to the royal officers. The postal revenues also passed into the king's treasury, and in some provinces a duty was paid for the right of establishing and

using ferries, for keeping game-cocks, and for selling the beverages known as *guarapo* and *pulque*. The revenues were collected by officers of the different departments of the administration, and placed at the disposal of the *Juntas Superiores de Hacienda* meeting at the capitals, and which were composed of the *Intendente*, who was the president, the Regent of the *Audiencia*, two *Contadores Majores*, the *Fiscal de la Civil*, the *Oficial Real* (senior in office), and one *Escribano Real*.\*

The condition of the Spanish-American provinces under the Spanish rule is forcibly depicted in the letters of Mr. William Walton to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, etc., published in London in 1814. Bribery and corruption were the springs by which every thing was moved. Monopolies of various kinds, and in the most essential articles, absorbed the industry of the lower classes; and restrictions of trade and prohibitory systems rendered every thing stagnant, and left the choicest productions of no value. Besides the onerous monopolies which existed in favor of the crown and of individuals, the liberty of the press was unknown, the planting of the vine and olive was forbidden in most sections,† generally the distilling of spirits, and also the growing of hemp and flax. It was unlawful to whale or fish for cod, as well as to trade between the respective provinces, not only in articles brought from Spain, but even in those of their own growth. Coasting trade was not allowed, and intercourse with foreigners was pronounced a capital crime, and punished as such.

Estrada observes (*Examen Imparcial*, fol. 149) that the Spanish government, in order to hold the Americans in greater subjection to its own dominion, conceived that the best means was to prohibit them from manufacturing any thing made in Spain, or from growing on their soil any of her productions. Hence they were forbidden to rival the wine, brandies, oil, raisins, almonds, silk, cloth, glass, etc., of the mother country, on whom

\* See "*Titulos de la Alcabala*," "*Ensayo del Oro*," etc., RECOPIACION DE LAS INDIAS.

† "Quedando expresamente prohibido para la Nueva España Tierra-firme y Santa Fé, los vinos, aguardientes, vinagre, aceyte de olivas, pasas, y almendras, de Peru y Chili y privados rigurosamente en todas partes los plantios de olivares y vinas."—*Vide Gazeta de Mexico*, 6 de Octubre, 1804; also, *Censor Extraordinario*, No. 59, Cadiz, 1812.

they became dependent for their supplies of these articles. They were not suffered to work the quicksilver mines, with which their country abounds, and the king preferred to expend a considerable sum annually in the port of Trieste than that the Americans should not be beholden to him for the requisites to amalgamate their ores. \* \* \* \* \* The great restrictions on the importation of books were also extremely grievous; for, if any thing besides prayer-books and catechisms escaped the vigilance of the Custom-house searcher, it was difficult to elude the fangs of the Inquisition, on whose expurgatory list were to be found the best and most useful authors in modern languages. It even entered into the colonial policy of Spain to hide from the Americans the real and faithful details of the primitive conquest of their country; so much so, that the works of Las Casas, who was at the same time venerated as a saint, were forbidden by government because they constituted a true and just picture of the horrors and cruelties committed by the first conquerors against the inoffensive Indians, and enumerated the ravages and destruction of the principal towns with the ardor of a Christian and the truth of an eyewitness. Epic poems and romances in praise of the first conquerors, like the history of Solis, were alone suffered to be read, and in which the ignorance and vices of the defenseless natives were alleged as the plea for the unheard-of butcheries which so soon depeopled these lately-discovered nations of the world. \* \* \* \* \*

Patriotic societies, which had for their object beneficence and the dissemination of knowledge, were prohibited under the most specious pretexts, as well as the study of the laws and rights of nations, which latter were supposed to form no part of the claims of Americans. The Indian college of Tlalclolco was abolished because the natives of Colora therein acquired information. Cacique Cirilo de Castilla spent thirty years of his life in endeavoring to found an Indian college in La Puebla, but died in Madrid without succeeding. Don Juan Francisco, an Opata chief, traveled to Mexico on foot, a distance of five hundred leagues, and then crossed the ocean to Madrid, solely to solicit a grant to found a school in his own interior province, for the only purpose of teaching his fellow-Indians the first rudiments; but he was refused by the Council of the Indies in



1798. A patriotic society, founded by the benevolent Villaurrutia in Guatemala for the object of encouraging the arts and sciences, was also interdicted as offensive to the views of the court.\*

It was not until early in the present century that the first recorded symptoms of revolt began to manifest themselves. There can scarcely be drawn any parallel between the chain of events leading to the Central American Revolution and that of the British American colonies. The inborn adherence to their rights, and the sturdy opposition to tyranny distinguishing the patriots of the North, were wanting in the lethargic Central Americans, among whom public instruction was confined to the wealthy and the members of the Church, freedom of discussion unknown, and the minds of the people shrouded in the profoundest ignorance. As a consequence, stirring incidents like those preceding the American Revolution were not brought out by resistance to innovations upon rights which the people lacked the intelligence to appreciate and the spirit to assert. The great body of those who, by education, were able to estimate the beneficial results of a political change, were the occupants of lucrative offices, which, under the favor of the viceroys, had descended without contention through certain families almost as hereditary privileges.

Those families had gradually grown into a wealthy aristocracy, assuming the title of *Noblesse*, some of them having purchased patents of nobility, and greedily monopolizing for themselves and friends every avenue to preferment and wealth. Most of the office-holders were American-born, but the sons of European Spaniards. The overbearing manners of an ignorant, self-created nobility, possessing no virtuous or manly traits, instead of inspiring the people with respect, irritated and disgusted them. The more intelligent classes, by their precarious commercial intercourse with foreigners, had already begun to estimate this aristocracy, as well as the power of the mother country, at its real value. The impression, which had been carefully inculcated by Spain into the minds of her colonists, that the oth-

\* This institution (*Sociedad Economica de los Amigos del Reyno*) was re-established after the Independence, and is still in existence. In 1855 it contributed a valuable scientific collection to the Great Exhibition at Paris.

er nations of Europe were tributary to her, had been dispelled by the great events agitating Europe. The circulation of foreign news and the introduction of the useful inventions was jealously guarded against; but, despite these precautions, each of the provinces had its galaxy of talented and liberally educated men, among whom could be cited the celebrated scholar, Dr. Ruis, of Nicaragua, and Señors Valle, Barrundia, and Matute, of Honduras and Guatemala.

Without the incentive of extreme and violent acts of tyranny, such as usually beget opposition in an oppressed people, the course of the government produced an increasing discontent among the most intelligent and reflective men. The waning fortunes of Spain had given rise to the levying of contributions in the provinces, which, though at first cheerfully paid by all parties, weighed at last so heavily on the people as to cause audible murmurs of dissatisfaction.

The Indian tribes, afterward a powerful political element in Central America, had been for many years ostensibly protected, but were in reality kept in ignorance and inferiority. The Spanish laws considered them as minors for life, subjecting them to perpetual tutelage. Among the ordinances to prevent their receiving instruction in any way was one prohibiting the Spaniards from entering the Indian villages; this, however, was not enforced for many years previous to the Independence. The Indians were also debarred from dancing or horse-riding, to prevent their acquiring any of the exercises of war; they were often cruelly tortured at the public whipping-post, and proprietors of mines could compel them to work at stipulated small wages.

The feeble encouragement lent by the government to the progress of education and the liberal arts in Central America was gradually withdrawn toward the close of the Spanish sovereignty, and the system of exactions and unjust contribution increased in rigor. Some fatality seemed to hasten the Spanish government to acts which could only accelerate the separation from her of the provinces. Pamphlets, and the writings and opinions of leading men, began to kindle a yearning for freedom, which increased with every fresh instance of oppression. Insurrections took place in 1812 in San Salvador and Nicaragua, which were promptly quelled, and the disaffected sent to Spain

for trial. Costa Rica, which took part against the insurgents, was rewarded with the title of *muy noble* conferred upon the city of Cartago, and *ciudades* upon the villages Heredia and San Jose. The city of Leon, however, claims the honor of having first raised the cry of independence from Spain.

Various instances of rebellion against the Spanish authority occurred up to 1821, animated, doubtless, by the example of Mexico, where the patriots Hidalgo, Morelos, Mina, and Victoria had waged in turn a war of independence with varying fortunes since 1809. The triumph of the patriotic cause in Mexico fanned the flame into new life in Central America, and with the arrival of Gavino Gainzá from Spain with news of the recent political changes in the peninsula, the fate of Spanish sovereignty was sealed. Conventions were held at Guatemala by the clergy and the leading families, and the country was publicly declared independent on the 15th of September, 1821, amid the shouts of the populace. The revolution was a peaceable and bloodless one. The proclamation or declaration of independence bears the signature of Gavino Gainza, afterward Provisional President; but this document was the product of the patriot José del Valle, who at that epoch appears, in point of zeal and industry, to have been the Samuel Adams of Central American independence. The Guatemalan viceroyal deputies at Madrid responded to this declaration on the following December by a splendid banquet, fully indorsing the proceedings of their colonial fellow-citizens.



GREAT SEAL OF HONDURAS.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CENTRAL AMERICA. 1821-1843.

The Central American Republic.—The Serviles and Liberals.—Francisco Morazan.—The Republic in Prosperity.—Rafael Carrera.—Dissolution of the Union.—Morazan a Fugitive.—Triumph of the Serviles.—Return of Morazan.—His Betrayal and Death.

FROM their renunciation of Spanish authority, the Central American States have presented, with brief intervals, a deplorable spectacle to every lover of republican institutions. The experiment of self-government, after thirty-five years of revolutions and exhausting wars, has proved itself a lamentable failure. With no lack of patriotism, or a consciousness of their responsible position before the world, they have shown a blind persistence in frantic sectional strifes and aimless revolutions, each of which has but the more fatally impelled the country to its present enfeebled condition. Various styles of republicanism have arisen and disappeared, and a generation has passed away in the futile attempt to unite forms of government with political theories, while between them only repelling forces have existed.

In the vain endeavor to supply radical defects by a reorganization of the social system, violent and frequent changes, involving wars of castes, have taken place, until a country, embracing the most valuable portion of the continent, with a geographical position as an avenue for universal commerce not surpassed in the globe, has descended, with surprising rapidity, to decay and political insignificance. The example afforded by the astonishing progress of the United States remained unheeded, save by impracticable imitations of our Constitution, without the moderation and intelligence to turn them to account. The *pronunciamientos* of ambitious leaders were generally followed by an appeal to arms. The president of to-day might be the exile of to-morrow; the minister of one week the fomenter of insurrection the next. What in the United States is effected by



the ballot-box, was there accomplished by the cannon and bayonet.

The successive eras of bloodshed and anarchy are illustrations of the great truth that republican institutions can not exist where popular ignorance and unprincipled rulers are constant enemies to progress and the blessings of liberty. Auspicious as was the dawn of freedom upon Central America, it is true that, since that event, the country has afforded but a melancholy caricature upon the name of republicanism, indicating by incontestable facts that its ruin was but precipitated by the separation from Spain.

The intelligence of the independence was responded to in Honduras and San Salvador by a similar declaration on their part; the local authorities were deposed, but, being natives of the country, were reinstated on an acquiescence in the general movement. Nicaragua did not join the Revolution until the 11th of October, when that province declared for the Mexican plan of Iguala, the object of which was the establishment of a Spanish prince on the throne, but to be independent of the mother country. A provisional government was formed, to hold power until the 1st of March, 1822. A General Congress of delegates from the provinces met at Guatemala, but were forcibly prevented from carrying their measures into effect by a popular tumult, instigated by the adherents to the old vice-royal institutions; and after some days of ineffectual legislation they dissolved.

It was here that the Liberals, as they were afterward called, first found that their patriotic views were not to be realized without a struggle. The establishment of Iturbide on the Mexican throne had excited the ambition of a large party to form an empire in conjunction with that country, and Gainza publicly announced his views as favorable to such a project in a manifesto, dated 5th of January, which he read in person, as President of the Republic, and formally announcing the connection with Mexico.\* San Salvador signalized herself by an un-

\* The policy of Gainza appears to have been anticipated by Vidaurre, who, writing from Puerto Principe, says, "La noticia que voy á comunicar á V. no debe sorprenderle. Guatemala ha declarado su Independencia, y Gainza está á la cabeza del sistema libre. \* \* \* \* \* Pero siendo nombrado Inspector General Gainza por la España y convertirse contra ella, es lo que no desimulo.

compromising opposition to this measure. She erected a government of her own, took up arms in defense of absolute independence, and was seconded by a portion of Nicaragua. The first blood shed in the factious wars of Central America was during the strifes at Guatemala between the Mexican and Republican parties; but at San Salvador was fought, on the 3d of June, the first pitched battle, waged by the Mexican party against that state in support of the pretensions of Iturbide. The invading army was defeated and dispersed. The provisional government of the state, aware of their inability to cope with Mexico and the rest of Central America, publicly proclaimed their annexation to the United States by an act bearing date the 2d of December, but it is not known that any reply was made to the decree. San Salvador was shortly afterward invested by General Filisola, who was dispatched against it with a large force from Ciudad Real. The city surrendered on the 7th of February, 1823, and Central America became virtually incorporated with Mexico, though the recognition by Costa Rica, San Salvador, and the city of Granada was still withheld.

At this juncture the news arrived of the fall of Iturbide in Mexico, and insurrections breaking out in various sections of the republic against the Mexican authorities, the National Constituent Assembly again convened at Guatemala. On the 24th of June the "Republic of Central America" was proclaimed, consisting of the five Central American provinces; the Federal Constitution was modeled after that of the United States of North America. A national flag of blue, white, and blue was adopted, and has since been mainly preserved in the States as distinct sovereignties. The Assembly enacted many liberal laws, and, at the close of the year 1823, the republic enjoyed uninterrupted peace.

During the ensuing year serious insurrections arose in Leon, Nicaragua, where, after numerous skirmishes and bloody battles, the city was attacked by Sacano and Salas, and endured a siege of one hundred and fourteen days, in which the most hor-

\* \* \* \* \* Gainza, desde que fué General contra Chili manifestó que su plan era su utilidad. Quería mando y riquezas en aquel partido que le ofreciese mayores ventajas."—*Cartas Americanas Políticas y Morales sobre la Guerra Civil de las Americas*. 1823.

rible excesses were perpetrated; but the besiegers were compelled to retire in January, 1825. This war, happening in 1824, was conducted by political chieftains for the commander-generalship of that state, and was finally terminated by the army of the republic under General Arce.

With this exception, the republic remained quiet through the years 1824-5, and was engaged in defending the boundaries of the different states and regulating the general government. On the 6th of February, 1825, the first Federal Congress convened, and General Manuel José Arce was elected President. An ecclesiastical dispute between San Salvador and Guatemala was also submitted to an appeal to arms, leaving a rankling hatred between the two states never wholly eradicated.

The second Federal Congress opened its session at Guatemala on the 1st of March, 1826. The message of President Arce is perhaps the best criterion of the condition of the republic at that time. In it he congratulates the Legislature on the general tranquillity enjoyed by the States, and the establishment of friendly relations with foreign nations, with the single exception of Spain, which still refused its recognition of the republic. Ministers and envoys had been sent to the principal powers, and a treaty of "commerce, friendship, and navigation" drawn up at Washington by the Central American minister, Señor Cañas. The Federal system had been perfected throughout the country, the public debt ("*credito antiguo*") diminished, and liberal encouragement held out to foreign enterprise.

"The government, anxious to establish the system of mutual instruction after the establishment of the new government, directed its minister at the United States to procure a professor, capable of transplanting and diffusing that plan in the republic, while it disseminated throughout the provinces a pamphlet, printed in Mexico, in which the new method was explained, and a committee was selected to translate the projects of Fourcroy, Condorcet, and Talleyrand on the subject of public instruction."<sup>\*</sup>

The fall of Iturbide had terminated the plans of the Imperialists in behalf of Mexico, and the issue of permanent alliance with that country had temporarily ceased to exist. The polit-

\* Sketch of the History and Present State of Guatemala.

ical parties had already begun to be known as the "Servile" and "Liberal," though it was not until the election of Aycinena as Governor of Guatemala in 1826 that the factions nominally resolved themselves into these distinctions. The Liberals, who possessed some of the ablest and most patriotic men of the country, were composed of the large body of the middle classes, who, since the dawn of liberty, had particularly labored for the establishment of a Federal Republic, modeled, to some extent, after that of the United States. They avowed for their principles the equalizing and instruction of all classes, hostility to a revival of the former so-called nobility or aristocracy, and the advancement of really just and liberal measures. These, in their patriotic zeal, they attempted to establish among a people unfitted by ignorance and hereditary prejudices to understand them.

The Serviles, or Conservatives, were understood as embracing the remnants of the old aristocracy and the priesthood, who, by wealth and religious influence, controlled the Indian, negro, and mixed races. Their object had been, as disclosed since the first days of the Independence, the establishment of their own creatures in power, the subversion of the liberties of the people, and the gradual erection of a supreme dictatorship or monarchy, as circumstances might direct.

The republic continued to exist under the administration of Arce as originally decreed, but was constantly subjected to the destroying agencies of both political parties. Ambitious leaders in Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua arose against the federal authorities, and in Costa Rica an attempt was made, in 1826, to restore the Spanish sovereignty. These rebellions, however, were mainly instigated by the Serviles, who, though looking forward to eventual monarchical institutions, now confined themselves to the work of supplanting the existing authorities by their own partisans as the safest avenue to the consummation of their schemes. Thus the wars for some years were ostensibly waged by the constituted Federal government against the insurrectionary movements in the several states—movements made, not so much for the purpose of effecting an immediate radical change in the government as for the elevation to power of local leaders of their own political views.

The National Assembly, in 1824, signalized itself by abolish-



ing slavery throughout the republic thenceforth and forever—this being the first instance of national action on this subject on the American continent. The whole number, however, thus emancipated, as is asserted by Molina, did not exceed one thousand, whose owners were indemnified for the losses thus sustained. Mr. Young Anderson's report says, "The citizens refused pecuniary compensation, although such was provided and offered."

It was in the midst of insurrections against the general government that President Arce, on the 6th of September, 1826, professed to have discovered an organization against the republic, led by José Francisco Barrundia, then Governor of Guatemala, as one of the confederation of states. With an arbitrary assumption of power wholly unwarranted by the facts, he caused the arrest of the governor while presiding over the State Assembly, which was followed by the disarming of the civic militia. An extraordinary national Congress was convoked by Arce for a reorganization of the Federal system, but dissensions arising as to where it should be held, it never convened, and following quickly on these events commenced the desolating wars which have gradually reduced Central America to its present pitiable condition. Honduras and San Salvador declared themselves independent of the confederation in the following year, and in each of these states severe battles were fought between the Liberal and Servile, or Federal forces, with varying success, but the victory finally declaring for the combined troops of Honduras and Nicaragua, under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Diaz.

This decisive result was mainly attributable to the bravery and skill of a native of Honduras, Francisco Morazan, who thenceforth became the acknowledged chief of the Liberal party, and in all respects the greatest man of the country. This leader was born about the year 1799, in Honduras; his father was a native of Porto Rico, and his mother a lady of Tegucigalpa. His ancestors were natives of Corsica, a fact upon which he is said to have greatly prided himself. He was distinguished in youth for his active mind and impulsive disposition, and his talents early gained him a prominent position in his native state. When only twenty-five years of age he was appointed Secretary-general, and afterward became Governor of Honduras. In the fourteen years succeeding his first victory in Honduras, his ca-



FRANCISCO MOREAZAN.

reer was marked with singular activity and skill, and an unvarying humanity in war before unknown in the bloody history of Central America. He is said to have united the qualities of the legislator and commander, with a frank, chivalrous bearing, inspiring his followers with a confidence of victory. His troops, animated by his personal bravery, loved and followed him with feelings akin to idolatry. The numerous aboriginal tribe of Texiguat Indians joined his fortunes with scarcely an exception—some of them forming his jealous and faithful body-guard—addressing him by the affectionate name of “*tio*,” and cheerfully following him, when nearly famished and exhausted, on the most fatiguing marches.\*

\* “His figure was good, his features handsome and intelligent, his ruddy complexion and bright blue eye proving that his blood was different from that of his

Early in 1828 Arce was craftily deprived of his position as President of the republic by the Vice-president Beltranca, in whose hands he had temporarily intrusted the supreme power, and who continued to exercise the functions of office until January of the following year. During 1828 San Salvador was the scene of hotly-contested battles between the Federal forces, under the command of General Arce, and the state troops, in which the latter were twice defeated, and the engagements signalized by the most appalling butcheries of prisoners. The Federal government was temporarily re-established in San Salvador, but was soon afterward driven out by the inhabitants, who defeated the troops and took prisoners the Servile leaders. In the same year the Guatemalan forces were routed by those of Honduras, commanded by Morazan, who had now assumed the rank of general-in-chief of the Liberal forces. The victory which took place on the banks of the River Lempa, in San Salvador, was followed up with vigor, and the defeated troops being a second time attacked, they laid down their arms. This engagement terminated the Federal authority under Servile auspices in Central America, and the influence of that party thenceforth rapidly declined. Conspiracies and insurrections occurred in Guatemala, and in January, 1829, the authorities of the state having been deposed, Morazan considered the time an auspicious one for an invasion of the state, which he shortly after accomplished, at the head of two thousand San Salvador and Honduras troops. After several engagements, the city of Guatemala was carried, the existing authorities expelled, and those deposed by the mob at Quesaltenango in 1826 reinstated in office. The former deputies and leading men of the Liberal party assembled, and extraordinary honors were decreed to Morazan. The old Federal Congress again assembled, and Barrundia, formerly Governor of Guatemala, was nominated President, Morazan generously abstaining from availing himself of his military power.

mongrel Spanish countrymen. His address was frank and independent, and quite free from the mixture of pride and ignorance, fawning and insolence, so universal in the natives of Spanish America who have attained a little brief authority. He had acquired a knowledge of the French language after leaving school, and from reading French books and history, combined with his descent, had imbibed a great partiality for that nation.”—*Dunlop's Travels in Central America*, p. 171.



One of the first important acts of Morazan, after his triumphant re-establishment of the Liberal party in power, was to strike at the root of the disturbances which had hitherto agitated the country. A conspiracy against the new government being discovered on the part of the Archbishop of Guatemala, he was banished, in company with the principal monks and friars of that state. This decisive proceeding met with universal approval, and the Congress followed it with decrees prohibiting females from becoming nuns for the future, and suppressing all male convents. The act was immediately carried into effect throughout the republic. The exactions and severities practiced by the Servile party while in power was met by the new government with general confiscations of property. The justice and prudence of this proceeding has been called in question; but such severities were in part merited by those who had not scrupled to enrich themselves at the expense of the defeated, a practice which has since been followed in Central America. Arce, Beltranea, and the State and Federal ministers of the Servile party were banished by act of the new Congress.

The Liberal party had now regained their position in Central America. So general seemed the desire of the people to witness the re-establishment of the principles enunciated at the Independence, and for which the most illustrious citizens of the republic had labored for years preceding and subsequent to the Revolution, that scarcely a dissenting voice was heard against the new order of affairs. The confederation of states was renewed, public education fostered, foreign immigration encouraged, and the most intelligent and capable men of the country placed in the leading offices. At no time since the Independence has Central America enjoyed an equal interval of tranquillity. The praise of this striking social revolution is principally due to Morazan, who now evinced for the cabinet a talent not exceeded by that already displayed in the field.

During the years 1829, '30, '31, the military operations of Morazan were confined to the extermination of bands of robbers who had formed during the civil wars. Such was his desire to maintain peace, even at the hazard of his own power, that, although Costa Rica declared itself independent of the republic shortly after the establishment of the Liberal party, he prefer-



red that example rather than force should restore her to the confederation. His prudence and judgment were justified, and early in 1831 that state peaceably acknowledged the Federal authority.

The same moderation was shown in his management of the factions of Honduras in 1829. An insurrection breaking out in Olancho, produced by an attempt at taxation, was quelled by Morazan in person, who, with a small escort, proceeded into the department, and by his conciliatory measures succeeded in restoring peace. The goal toward which the most patriotic men of the country had struggled unceasingly for many years seemed now to have been reached. The republic had already assumed a position among the nations.

This season of tranquillity was destined to but short duration. The rude hand of war, with all the elements of discord, appeared to have slumbered during this interval only to burst forth with the greater fury. In 1832 the exiled President Arce returned with a large force from Mexico, and nearly simultaneously insurrections broke out in San Salvador. Morazan promptly invaded the state, and, having met and defeated the insurgents, took the city of San Salvador, arrested the Revolutionists, and sent them to Guatemala for trial. He then committed the indiscretion of assuming the supreme power of the state, an error which was taken advantage of by the expectant Serviles to excite discontent and rebellion throughout the country. Various causes of dissatisfaction were discovered, secession was openly advocated as a coercive measure, and in April, 1833, Honduras, San Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica had formally renounced the authority of the Federal government. Though a disruption of the States had virtually taken place, the actual dissolution of the Central American Union can not be said to have occurred, as the Federal authorities thereafter continued to discharge the functions of office. The new Congress on the basis of an equal representation of the States never met.

Frequent internal dissensions occurred in the state through the years 1834-5, in only one of which—that relating to San Salvador—the State and Federal authorities came into collision. Though the year 1836 was a recurrence of the limited era of tranquillity above referred to, no successful attempt was made

to re-establish the Federal government on a firm basis. Meanwhile the Servile party, watchful of events, had been actively but silently concerting measures to regain their former power. Besides being mainly instrumental in exciting the States to rebellion, they had joined with the priesthood in instigating the Indians to rise against the authorities.

The first recorded organization of the aboriginal tribes against the government (a movement with which commenced the downfall of the republic, and influenced materially the subsequent history of the country) occurred in June, 1836. It was in this year that the cholera first made its appearance in Central America. The priests availed themselves of the terror inspired by the epidemic to excite the lower orders against the authorities, persuading them that the mortality was caused by the poisoning of the springs by the government agents. Serious disturbances ensued; the doctors, who had been commissioned to visit the localities where the disease was most prevalent, were murdered, and all efforts, made by the government or by private means for the relief of the suffering Indians, were artfully construed by the priests and members of the Servile party to the accomplishment of their dark designs. The adoption of the Livingston Code of Laws, and the establishment of the new court for trial by jury in 1836, had gradually become extremely unpopular, especially among the Indians who had been compelled to labor in the construction of the new prisons. Each of these causes of discontent was exaggerated and distorted by the active agents of the Servile party. The disorders arising from these causes, at first regarded with unconcern by the government, speedily assumed an aspect well calculated to excite alarm. Great numbers of the Indians met in the town of Santa Rosa, in Guatemala, and, being visited by a body of government troops with orders to disperse the assemblage, a collision ensued, resulting in the defeat of the soldiers.

As the battle in October, 1827, which brought the military talent of Morazan into notice, was on that account an occurrence of lasting importance in the history of Central America, so the affair at Santa Rosa was an event of equal moment, as first introducing into political life the Indian leader, Rafael Carrera, a

man thenceforth to exert a baneful influence on the destinies of the republic.\*

The year 1838 came in with renewed rebellions in various departments of Guatemala. As early as January the city of Guatemala was taken by Pedro Valasquez, who assumed the authority with scarcely any opposition from the inhabitants. During this time, Carrera, who in cunning and fertility of expedient had become a formidable enemy, had collected a large body of Indians in Mita, where he was attacked by General Morazan in March, and his forces routed. The campaign, however, produced no important results, and a second one, in November, terminated in treaties, with which the year closed. In view of the alarming aspect of affairs, the supreme authority was temporarily consigned to General Morazan, Señor Paz assuming meanwhile the duties of chief magistrate.

But the insurgents in San Salvador, taking advantage of the disturbed condition of the government, had again organized under the leadership of Francisco Malespin, and in August, Morazan proceeding thither to quell the revolt, his absence was improved by Carrera to attack the Federal troops under Bonilla, who was completely routed. Emboldened by this triumph, the

\* Dunlop describes Carrera as a "dark-colored and extremely ill-looking Mestizo. He was originally a servant to a woman of no very respectable character in Amatitlan, and afterward to a Spaniard, from whom he is supposed to have got the little knowledge and breeding he possessed when he first appeared on the political stage in Guatemala. Afterward he was employed as a pig-driver, that is, in purchasing and personally driving pigs from the villages to Guatemala, and the more populous towns. \* \* \* \* \* It must be allowed, however, that, though at the commencement of his power he perpetrated some horrid acts of cruelty which any one must shudder to recount, and frequently put to death his real or supposed enemies with the most dreadful tortures, without a shadow of proof or form of trial, he has since conducted himself with remarkable moderation, and has done much to improve the administration of the laws, destroy robbers, and consolidate the government. By extortions and confiscations he has amassed some hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash, lands, and houses, and it is consequently his interest to maintain a settled government and give protection to property; but in his private life he is more indecently immoral than could be conceived or understood by most English readers. \* \* \* \* \* All classes, except the Indians, have never ceased to hate and fear him, and watch an opportunity to overturn his power; and, though he takes great care always to keep a body of troops near his person, and has large supplies of arms and ammunition at hand, he will certainly find that the very best troops in whom he trusts will betray him, and that the arms and ammunition will one day be used for his destruction."—Page 89.

insurgents advanced upon Old Guatemala, which they occupied without resistance on the following day. They were encountered by the Federal troops under Salazar, and in their turn defeated with great slaughter. Had this leader followed up this advantage, the successes of Carrera might have been effectually checked; but, owing to some disputes with rival commanders, he pettishly resigned his commission, and, the faction gaining power daily, the opportunity was lost.

The National Congress this year passed an act authorizing the several states to frame laws for their own government, the Federal power reserving its general authority and the right to collect the customs. The act was a virtual acknowledgment of the disruption of the States. A few months later, the twelfth and last session of this assembly was held, and immediately after the States proclaimed their entire independence, and proceeded to organize distinct governments. The act of Nicaragua declaring itself free, sovereign, and independent, is dated April 30th, 1838.\* Although a dissolution of the confederation had been formerly announced by all the states excepting Guatemala in 1832, the Union appears to have been tacitly preserved and the National Congress recognized up to February, 1839, when Morazan concluded his second presidential term; and with that expiration the Central American republic may be said to have ended.

The year 1839 commenced with a general warlike movement throughout Central America. A total revolution had occurred in Guatemala, and the short space of twelve years had witnessed the rise and fall of the Liberal party. Carrera, from a passive instrument in the hands of the Servile party, had become an ambitious leader, wielding a terrible engine of destruction—the Indian hordes of Guatemala—but yet subservient to the behests of the priesthood, who, in their determination to crush Morazan and restore the lost privileges of the Church, did not scruple to

\* The Federal compact having been thus dissolved, the decree of April 17th, 1824, of the National Assembly, abolishing slavery in Central America, was rendered null and void for Nicaragua, a circumstance since seized upon by Walker (September 22d, 1856) to revive the original laws of the Spanish viceroyalty as to slavery, the right to hold which was thus virtually acknowledged, and that institution again sanctioned in a country by which, thirty-two years previously, it had been rejected at the first session of the Republican Legislature.



let loose the whirlwind, which neither they nor the self-created nobles of the Servile party were afterward able to control.

It was now that Morazan began to display in an imminent degree the tireless energy and invincible perseverance which has left his name a landmark in the history of his country. The State of San Salvador still adhered to the old Federal government, and Morazan, constituting its capital his head-quarters, collected around him a considerable body of troops, in addition to those who had inseparably linked their fortunes with his. Faithful to the principles he had espoused from his earliest association with public life, he determined to maintain the Liberal cause, and, refusing to recognize the dissolution of the Union, retained the name of President, and prepared to meet the storm which now threatened him from every quarter.

The first important move was from Nicaragua, from whence two thousand men entered San Salvador, defeated the Federal troops at the River Lempa, and took possession of San Vicente. After several bloody engagements, a decisive victory was gained by Morazan over the united forces of Honduras and Nicaragua, commanded by General Francisco Ferrara, who, after the subsequent complete restoration of the Servile party, exercised in Honduras a tyrannical rule scarcely less arbitrary than that of Carrera in Guatemala.

The victory of the River Lempa was followed by similar successes in Honduras. General José Trinidad Cabañas, whose character and public services have been elsewhere described, was dispatched by Morazan to pursue the retreating enemy. After several engagements, Cabañas took possession of Comayagua on the 28th of August, 1839, and shortly after of Tegucigalpa. Ferrara, meanwhile, had sustained a second defeat at the hands of Morazan, who, with a comparatively small force, attacked and routed his forces with great slaughter. These successes, however, were but the precursors of the ruin to which the Liberal party was rapidly hastening. The mob in San Salvador, excited by the emissaries of the Serviles and the priesthood, arose against the authority of Morazan, but the insurrection was speedily quelled. The nominal authority of the Liberal party was formerly renounced by a general revolution throughout Guatemala, while Carrera, who had been silently

but actively collecting his forces, made a sudden incursion upon the city of Guatemala, which, being entirely at his mercy, fell without resistance into his hands.

A succession of diabolical cruelties followed the establishment of Carrera's authority in Guatemala. The party which, for the furtherance of its own nefarious designs, had not hesitated to encourage the ferocious advance of this brutal leader, now found itself unable to control the power they had invoked. Supported by his Indian hordes, who from affinity of blood and associations had become a terrible and irresistible agent ever at his command, Carrera assumed the dictatorship, and commenced a system of murders and proscriptions against all of the opposite party who had not made their escape. On the 17th of April the confederation of states was declared dissolved, and the State of Guatemala erected into an independent government.

The progressive and liberal laws enacted by the preceding governments were annulled, and some institutions which had been abolished by Morazan were revived. Carrera, however, refused to restore to the priesthood many of the Church privileges, wisely refraining from recreating a power which, once firmly seated, would have quickly overthrown his authority. Each of the states named presidents or other executive officers, and nominal forms of government were established, though the empty name of republic still continued to be used.

The year 1840 was marked with many important events. The power of Carrera being established, he directed his efforts toward inciting an insurrection in the Department of Quesaltenango, which, after the dissolution of the republic, had erected itself into a sovereign state under the name of Los Altos. A division of Los Altos troops, marching to effect a junction with the forces of Morazan in San Salvador, were defeated by those of Guatemala under General Monteroso, and on the following day Carrera routed and dispersed the remainder of the opposing army, after which the victors took possession of Quesaltenango, which thenceforth became an integral part of Guatemala. This result had been the object of Carrera in exciting, by means of his emissaries, the rebellion in Los Altos. Throughout this war, which was confined to Guatemala, the most appalling cruelties were perpetrated by the invading troops. The of-

ficers of the government were brutally murdered, and in many instances put publicly to death by slow tortures too horrible for narration.

During this year all industry and commerce came to an end. Towns had fallen to ruins, agriculture had ceased, and the whole country relapsed into a state of wretched barbarism. From this description, however, Costa Rica should be partially excepted; her position, remote from the theatre of war, had exempted her from participating in the strifes of her neighbors, and the rapid settlement of foreigners had been a powerful element in the development of her resources.

The greatest efforts of General Morazan had only enabled him to collect twelve hundred men, with whom to oppose the alarming progress of Carrera. Secret advices from Guatemala had represented the present as a favorable moment for action, and, advancing from San Salvador with his small army, he fought his way to Guatemala, which he entered and took possession of on the 18th of March. Here he was surrounded by five thousand troops under Carrera, and, being deserted by the perfidious parties who had invited him into the country, he was forced to cut his way out of the city through the masses of the enemy, leaving one half of his troops behind, many of whom had fallen in the twenty-four hours of desperate fighting preceding the order to retreat. Those who were unable to escape were barbarously massacred by order of Carrera. A party of officers, who sought refuge in the British consulate, were surrendered by the consul, with the understanding that they should have a legal trial, but were immediately butchered in the streets.

Morazan effected a masterly retreat toward San Salvador, steadily repulsing the detachments sent in pursuit. His wavering fortunes had lost him the few adherents still remaining in San Salvador, and, seeing the country hopelessly passed into the power of the Servile party, he embarked on the 5th of April from the port of Libertad, with thirty-five friends and partisans, and arrived safely at Valparaiso in Chili.

The object of the Servile party, which from the first had been the restoration of the Spanish form of government, was far from being accomplished by the overthrow of Morazan and the Liberals. Their policy, which they had fondly hoped to advance

by enlisting the sword of Carrera, had been artfully considered by this leader, who now showed himself to be possessed of qualities for intrigue and command as surprising to his creators as they were inimical to their plans. Backed by his faithful but terrible Indian multitudes, and by the priesthood, whom he had found means to conciliate, he defied the efforts of the old party to regain their political power, and was thenceforth the virtual supreme dictator of the state. The departure of the only man with the nerve and talent to make a formidable enemy left him nothing to fear, and his attention was then, as it has since been, mainly directed to the gradual absorption of the remaining states into one power, under his own authority.

As an act of retaliation upon San Salvador, that state was immediately invaded by Carrera with an overwhelming force, the authorities overthrown and replaced by others in his own interest, Malespin being appointed the military commander. The march of these invaders was marked with scenes of outrage and plunder still recurred to by the inhabitants with breathings of revenge and hate toward Carrera and his party.

The States remained at peace after the departure of Morazan and throughout the year 1841. An attempt was made in the following year, in Nicaragua, to restore the Federal form of government between that state and Honduras and San Salvador; but, although a president was chosen, and a supreme tribunal of legal appeal and a body of councilors decided upon, the project failed, owing to the refusal of Guatemala and Costa Rica to co-operate. The year 1842 is also a memorable one in the history of Central America as that in which General Morazan returned from his voluntary exile. Receiving encouraging accounts from his partisans in San Salvador, he landed at La Union in February. The intelligence of his return was received with renewed hopes by the now despairing Liberals, some of whom hastened to join him at the port. The State Legislature, however, immediately passed a decree of proscription against him and his followers, and in Guatemala his movements were regarded with ill-concealed alarm. The hostile attitude of the existing government convinced Morazan that the time was not an auspicious one for revolutionizing that state, and, re-embarking, he proceeded to Costa Rica, where, with his followers, he



landed at the port of Calderas. Accompanied by a considerable number of partisans, he marched toward San José, and, winning over the small force at Jocote, he entered the capital of the state, where he was received with extraordinary demonstrations of joy. Carrillo, the governor, was deposed by the spontaneous act of the people, and his life saved from their fury by the moderation of Morazan, who ordered him to be safely escorted to Calderas, whence he embarked for San Salvador.

General Morazan was elected governor of the state, and scarcely had he consolidated his new government when he commenced organizing an army for the support of those patriotic principles in the defense of which he had passed the best part of his life. His first attempts were made against Nicaragua, the forces of which, as Morazan declares in his last testament, were preparing to invade the disputed Department of Guanacaste, ostensibly to defend its territory, but in reality a renewal of the Servile faction to crush the threatened revival of the Liberal party in Central America. Had he been successful in entering Nicaragua as he proposed, he would from that point have set on foot a military expedition sufficiently powerful to subdue Central America and re-establish the republic.

His political views had been materially enlarged and improved by his twenty months' residence in South America. During his exile, far removed from the exciting theatre of strife, he had availed himself of his leisure to make minute observations upon the governmental policy of Chili and Peru, to note their defects, and compare their advantages with the inexperienced institutions of his own country. He came prepared to introduce many important changes into the former republican system of Central America, and advanced to the work with an ardor and sincerity which can leave no question of the purity of his motives.

But twenty years of bloodshed and fruitless changes had imbued the Costa Ricans with a prudent dislike of military expeditions. Though less prostrated than the other states, Costa Rica had learned by sad experience the demoralizing and destructive effects of revolutions. The general desire of the people was to keep aloof from the dissensions of the country, a policy, with rare exceptions, steadily adhered to since the Independence, and exhibiting as its results a condition of prosperity

affording a surprising contrast to the deplorable state of the sister republics. The efforts of Morazan to raise troops and money were disapproved by the Legislature, and the conscriptions evaded in every way by the people. Every discouragement was thrown in his path, not only by the apathetic spirit of the Costa Ricans, but by the artful intrigues of foreign agents and those of Guatemala, who lost no opportunity to inflame the discontent of the lower classes. The known antipathy of Morazan to the priesthood, and his banishment of the friars from Guatemala in 1829, had created a powerful enemy in the Church. The contribution of \$50,000, which he demanded for the purposes of this war, had not been raised in August, and secret organizations had already been formed against him.

The popular feeling against Morazan was greatly imbibited by an unfortunate event, which alienated from him some of the most influential families of the state, and probably hastened his tragical end. A young lady of Costa Rica had been abducted from her father's house by one of Morazan's officers, an affair which led to his imprisonment by his superior officer, General Rivas. Mortified by this indignity, and rendered desperate by the loss of the lady, Molina excited an insurrection among the troops, and, assuming the command, had Rivas put to death. General Sachet was dispatched to Calderas with the flower of the army to be present at the trial of Molina, who, although the most strenuous efforts were made by his friends to save his life, was condemned and shot. The youth and previous character of Molina, his apathy concerning his fate, and his voluntary surrender to the authorities after the first fatal act, were all urged by his family and friends, but in vain. Morazan, though mild and relenting in disposition, was inflexible in the administration of justice.

On the 11th of September, by a preconcerted movement, the insurrection broke out simultaneously at Alajuela, Heredia, and San José. On that day Morazan was entertaining a number of friends at the government house in the capital when the disturbance commenced in the streets. Don Juan Mora (afterward president of the state) was among the guests, and, exercising a controlling influence among the people, he proceeded to inquire the cause of the outbreak, while Morazan hastened to organize

his small forces at the cuartel. Most of his troops, however, were absent, a circumstance seized upon by his enemies, the priests, as peculiarly auspicious. He found the Plaza filled with the excited populace, and the troops already drawn up and preparing to defend themselves. Mora, true to his servile instincts, never returned.

The scanty force of the "*Morazanistos*" at this time were scattered about the town, but soon fought their way to the cuartel, where the ground was fiercely contested until night, when Morazan retained possession of a small portion of the square. The firing now ceased on the part of the besieged, but was continued through the night by the enemy. On the following morning, General Cabañas, with but twenty-five men, drove the assailants as far as the powder magazine, in the direction of the cemetery; but the enemy being re-enforced, and now amounting to above two thousand men, Cabañas in turn was forced to retreat. During the next day the contest around the cuartel was continued with obstinate fury, neither side yielding a foot of ground, and each apparently determined to fight to the death; the assailants urged on and encouraged by the priests, and the soldiers of Morazan encouraged by his personal courage and the prestige of his name.

But on the second day the enemy gained possession of the church commanding the cuartel, and, being joined by the "*Alajuelas*" and above twelve hundred recruits, resistance against such odds seemed impossible. Morazan, seeing his little force constantly falling around him, retired to the cuartel, surrounded by upward of three thousand of the enemy, afterward increased to five thousand; but such was the known courage and determination of the besieged, that none were found prepared to carry the place by assault. Proposals were now made for the surrender of Generals Villaseñor and Cordero, and the remainder of the party to leave Costa Rica unmolested. The generous Morazan refused to accept such conditions, and the fighting was continued through the third day.

At two o'clock General Cabañas, who, with a few men, had volunteered to protect the house where the family of Morazan were concealed, was driven back. The ladies were immediately dragged forth and conveyed to general quarters, where a

French physician, Dr. Castello, proposed to deliver them over to the mob; and, but for the manly interference of the Padre Madriz, this infamy would have been accomplished. On this day Morazan was severely wounded, but to the last it was observed that he preserved that placid serenity which his friends had ever loved to observe. New propositions were made for the surrender of Villaseñor and Cordero; and another, that "the besieged should march, with Morazan at their head, to the headquarters of the enemy, where their fate should be decided in half an hour!" These and other inhuman propositions were promptly rejected.

As night approached, the situation of the besieged became desperate; the handful of troops in possession of the cuartel, exhausted with eighty hours' constant fighting, were unable to protract the combat. Ammunition began to fail, and the distances for firing were limited by rule. Morazan was now suffering with a delirium of fever produced by his wound. At midnight a consultation was held by the principal officers, at which it was decided to cut their way that night through the enemy's lines. At this time Morazan was sleeping in his cloak, and the hour was deferred until three o'clock A.M., when the general, awaking the whole force, issued from the cuartel, the scene illumined by a full moon, and the little party offering a fair mark for their assailants.

The column took the Cartago road, losing nearly one third of their number in this movement. Five squares from the cuartel they encountered a hide rope stretched across the street, and a detachment of the enemy posted behind a barricade which had been erected near by. This the "Cartagos" were ordered to charge, but fell back in disorder upon a small band of Texiguat Indians who had joined Morazan on his arrival from South America. These followed Morazan, who spurred upon the enemy, and with an English riding-whip struck one of the enemy across the face, when the Indians charged, and the whole blockading party fled, leaving the street clear. They then continued their march out of the town, encountering and dispersing several parties who had been dispatched to cut off their retreat. On the outskirts of the town the natives of Cartago abandoned Morazan, leaving him but sixty men.



The general then held a hurried conversation with Villaseñor, when it was agreed that they should proceed to Cartago to inform their supposed friends and partisans, Mayorga, the commander of that place, and Espinac, a Spanish merchant, of what had occurred. This movement is represented to have been actuated by pure friendship for these men, to allow them to make their escape with the retreating forces, and is cited as illustrating the entirely unselfish and noble disposition of Morazan. It was by such deeds, worthy a wider fame and more extended field for their enactment, that this man had won the undying affection of his officers. Morazan and Villaseñor accordingly rode in advance of the troops toward Cartago, leaving General Cabañas in command, with orders to pursue his march with all speed to that place, where they would await him.

Arriving at Cartago, Morazan rode directly to the house of the commandante, who held his office under him, and had in various ways been the recipient of his generosity, and, alighting, was welcomed with apparent cordiality by Mayorga. Morazan, knowing him to be deeply compromised in his cause, gave him timely warning of his danger, and a full relation of his own reverse of fortune. With a perfidy singularly Spanish-American, this wretch listened attentively to the narration of his confiding visitor, and, judging from the facts that the cause of his master was hopeless, secretly ordered out a detachment of soldiers, who arrested Morazan a few steps from his door! This deed was partly at the instigation of Espinac, who had also learned the events transpiring at San José, both traitors lately professing the warmest friendship for the general, but now trusting to retrieve themselves with the revolutionary party. Espinac, however, pledged his word that the life of Morazan should be saved, and that his influence should be used to give him safe-conduct from the state. General Villaseñor was arrested at the same moment. The prisoners were kept closely confined, and allowed no communication with persons outside.

In the mean time, to perfect this tangle of treachery, a man named Orramuno was sent to meet Cabañas, requesting him not to pass with his troops through Cartago, urging in explanation, among other reasons, the danger of a collision between his soldiers and the citizens. Cabañas, still ignorant of the treachery

dealt upon Morazan, replied that his orders were to proceed to Cartago, and continued to move in that direction. But, on being told by Orramuno that Morazan and Villaseñor had already left Cartago, on the road toward Matina, a small port on the Atlantic coast, Cabañas sent General Serravia in advance to Cartago, to ascertain the truth of Orramuno's report.

On arriving at Cartago, the whole plot was disclosed, and Serravia, instead of returning to Cabañas, who might have planned a rescue, enthusiastically swore to die with his beloved general rather than enjoy liberty without him, and, making his way to the house of Mayorga, he was seized and at once imprisoned.

Another messenger was now dispatched to intercept Cabañas with a fictitious message from Serravia, to the effect that he had ridden forward to overtake Morazan on the road to Matina, and that the general had desired the troops should not be marched through the town. Cabañas pressed on toward Cartago with an indefinite misgiving, but not doubting the honor of Espinac and Mayorga. Francisco Morazan, a natural son of the general, rode on alone to Cartago, and, entering the town, was imprisoned with Morazan and Villaseñor.

Espinac, who was known to Cabañas as having enjoyed the full confidence of Morazan, met the troops some miles from the town, and, by repeating the words of his messengers, induced Cabañas to disband his little force, which was done on the spot. He then exchanged his horse and took a by-road, with several of his friends, to join Morazan, as he supposed, on the road to Matina. On reaching the point designated and inquiring for the general, he learned that he had not passed there, and the full extent of the treachery flashed upon him.

On the following morning he was surrounded by a party of Costa Ricans, at a village on the public highway, and imprisoned with a considerable number of the captured troops from San Salvador.

During the night of the 14th the prisoners were closely guarded at Cartago. While being manacled, Serravia was taken with convulsions and died in the presence of his companions. This circumstance was seized upon by his enemies to calumniate his memory with the accusation of suicide by poison. The charac-

ter of Serravia left no room for such a suspicion, and those of his friends who were in Costa Rica steadily deny the statement. He was a young man of rare talents and acquirements, and to the hour of his death a devoted partisan of Morazan, to whom, while in Costa Rica, he had acted as secretary. It is very possible, however, that, in his despair at the ruin and inevitable death of his friend, he may have been driven to self-destruction. But Villaseñor, when approached by the guard with irons, drew a pistol from his breast, and was only prevented from taking his own life by his weapon missing fire. He was gently disarmed by Morazan, who still displayed the courageous and dignified bearing ever distinguishing him in times of difficulty. Villaseñor soon afterward procured a knife, with which he stabbed himself in the breast, the wound not proving fatal.

The captives now heard the yells of the crowd, who, with the news of the capture of Morazan, entered the town with cries of "*Muerte á Morazan !*" but as yet the prisoners remained unmolested. Measures were taken to convey them to San José, where they arrived after a short march, the air filled with the shouts of the infuriated rabble. Morazan was mounted, but Villaseñor, weakened by the loss of blood, was borne in a chair. At the entrance of the town Morazan was ordered to dismount, the better to grace this triumphal entry. He walked from this place to the prison, where he arrived at three o'clock P.M.

Previous to his arrival, a mockery of consultation had been held, at which it was decreed by the self-constituted authorities that Morazan should die. The junta issuing this barbarous resolve was composed of citizens of San José, as follows: Antonio Pinto, newly-created commandante general; Luis Blanco, Padre Blanco, Domingo Carranza, Dr. Castillo, of infamous memory, and two Spaniards named Benavires and Farrufio.

Morazan was briefly notified that he had but three hours to live. He prepared for death with his wonted equanimity, and requested an interview with his friend, Señor Montealegre, which was granted; and having imparted to him his last message to his wife, and hastily making his will, he was hurried with Villaseñor to the place of execution.\* On arriving at the Plaza, he turned cheerfully toward Señor Montealegre, and, remembering

\* A copy of this document, in my possession, will be read with interest as the

that it was the anniversary of Central American Independence, he said, "My friend, this is a glorious day on which to take dying sentiments of Morazan, and throwing some light upon his character and the circumstances of his death :

[TRANSLATION.]

"San José, September 15th, 1842.

"On the anniversary of the Independence, the integrity of which I have endeavored to maintain. In the name of the Author of the Universe, in whose religion I die :

"I declare that I am married, and that I leave my wife my sole testamentary executrix.

"I declare that I have expended all my wife's and my own property in giving a government of laws to Costa Rica, and also \$18,000 (diez y ocho mil pesos) and its interest, for which I am indebted to General Pedro Bermudes.

"I declare that my death is unmerited ; that I have committed no fault but that of giving liberty to Costa Rica and procuring the peace of the republic. My death is consequently an assassination, the more aggravated that I have been neither judged nor heard. I have but executed the orders of the Assembly in consonance with my own desires to reorganize the republic.

"I protest that I have made the collection of troops that to-day occasions my death solely to defend the Department of Guanacaste, belonging to this state, and which, according to communications from the commander of said department, was menaced by the forces of Nicaragua ; that if afterward I have used a portion of these soldiers in the cause of the republic, I have taken simply those who voluntarily desired to march, for such enterprises are never undertaken with forced troops.

"I declare that to assassination is added the forfeiture of the word of Espinac, of Cartago, that my life should be saved.

"I declare that my love for Central America follows me to the tomb. I call upon the youth of this country (which I leave with sorrow, threatened with anarchy) to imitate my example, and die with firmness rather than abandon it to its present confusion.

"I declare that I have no enemies, nor do I carry to the sepulchre the least rancor against my assassins, whom I pardon and desire all possible blessings for.

"I die with the reflection of having caused some ills to my country, although with the sole desire of seeking its well-being ; and this feeling is rendered the more poignant from having rectified my opinions in the revolutionary career, and, anticipating the accomplishment of the benefits I had in view for the country by which to expiate those faults, I am unjustly deprived of my life.

"The disorder in which I write, being allowed but three hours in which to prepare for death,\* had caused me to forget that I have accounts with the house of Mr. M. Bennett, resulting from the mahogany cuttings on the northern coast, which I believe may amount to ten or twelve thousand dollars, which belong to my wife as compensation for the losses which she has sustained in her own property at the hacienda of Jupurá ; and I have also other debts known to Señor Losano.

"I desire that this testament may be printed wherever the results of my death and public negotiations may require.

FRANCISCO MORAZAN."

\* A term afterward shortened to one hour.



leave of one's country!" He presented his snuff-box to Montealegre, and was placed with Villaseñor in a kneeling posture. His request not to aim at his face was interrupted by a volley, at which both the victims fell. Villaseñor died without a struggle, but Morazan raised himself slightly from the ground, and his hat falling from his head as he did so, revealed his fine face convulsed in agony. He fell dead immediately after, and the monster Carranza, placing the hat upon his own head, strutted with insulting mien over the prostrate body.

Such was the death of Central America's best and greatest man; with him expired its last hope of nationality. He was shot at 4.30 P.M., on the 15th of September, 1842, the twenty-first anniversary of the Independence. In the small but sparkling galaxy of distinguished men of those states, few have equalled Morazan in true patriotism and honesty of purpose, and none in genius or the versatile talents necessary for the times and the country. In stature tall and commanding, with a winning address, and of a florid, genial disposition, he seemed peculiarly fitted to calm the discordant elements distracting Central America. Though rashly brave in the field, he was often censured by his partisans for injudicious clemency to the defeated. It is recorded of him that, amid the ruthless butcheries which have made the Central American wars a by-word for bloody public executions, he signed the death-warrant but twice while in power. The word "executed" is studiously avoided by the Liberal party to this day when speaking of his death, which is always referred to under the harsher and more appropriate one of "murder." His untimely fate may be traced to the intrigues of designing persons, who had long feared his powerful influence in thwarting their schemes for self-aggrandizement at the expense of their country. Morazan sacrificed his life in his persevering attempts to restore the republic. He prophesied the speedy destruction of the country under the system of petty sovereignties, and the subsequent history of Central America has verified his predictions.\*

\* His hatred of the Monarchists and Guatemalan aristocracy, and inveterate determination to preserve the integrity of the Confederation, is evinced in his spirited address printed in 1839, a single passage of which is sufficient to illustrate the energetic style of the author. "Ni las perlas del Golfo de Nicoya, ni el oro del Rio Guayape volveran á adornar la corona del Marquez de Aicénina;

In his eventful career, instances of rash judgment may be pointed out, but they were errors of an over-ardent and inexperienced man, giving promise of a maturity of lasting benefit to his country. Had he selected San Salvador, where he first landed on his return from South America, for the theatre of his patriotic exertions, or entered his native state of Honduras, though nearer to the centre of Servile power, the result might have been happier for himself and the Liberal cause. But under the reign of terror inaugurated by Carrera and his agents, it is doubtful if any portion of Central America was fully prepared for revolution. His flattering reception in Costa Rica and the speedy change in popular prejudice sufficiently illustrate the fickleness of a people who were as incapable of appreciating the greatness of Morazan as they were unworthy to enjoy the blessings of political liberty. His remains were conveyed to San Salvador some years afterward with a guard of Costa Rican citizens, and interred at Sonsonate, to await the completion of a tomb and monument at the city of San Salvador. The work was destroyed with the city in the terrible earthquake of April, 1854, after which they were finally deposited, with religious ceremonies, in the church at Mejicana, near Cojutepeque. The traitor Espinac has never since dared to visit San Salvador for fear of popular vengeance, and even in Costa Rica lives in dread of the retribution sworn by Morazan's relatives.

Cabañas and his friends were soon after placed on board the Coquimbo, the vessel which had brought Morazan from South America, with the understanding that they should sail at once for San Salvador. They remained, however, several weeks at Calderas, blockading the port, and making occasional excursions on shore in quest of provisions. These visits, which partook of the character of predatory excursions, gained the party the name of "*Los Coquimbos*." On arriving at San Salvador, they landed despite the edict of the government, and were cordially received by Malespin, who, though the most active agent in the overthrow of Morazan's government in 1840, had availed himself of his elevation to the position of commander-in-chief to side with the Liberals.

y si algun dia apareciese este símbolo horroroso de la Aristocracia, el será el blanco del soldado Republicano!"

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF CENTRAL AMERICA. 1843-57.

The Central American States as distinct Sovereignities.—Siege of Leon.—Insurrections.—Attempts to reconstruct the Republic.—Trinidad Cabañas President of Honduras.—The War with Guatemala.—Nicaragua as a Republic.—The Castellon and Chamorro War.—Enlistment of Americans.—Decline of the Administration of Cabañas.—Concluding Remarks.

AT the close of 1843 a temporary calm settled upon the states, each of which, preserving a nominal independence, maintained its own government under the direction of the most prominent local chieftains. After the death of Morazan, Costa Rica convoked a new Congress, and soon returned to the condition of quiet and comparative prosperity from which it had been aroused by his return. San Salvador remained under the government of Malespin, who from a highway robber had risen to the supreme power, to which he had been appointed by Carrera, but afterward declaring against the Guatemalan authority. The reins of government in Honduras were held by General Francisco Ferrera, who, having been elected governor in 1841, had annually succeeded to that position until elected to the presidency, an office which he appears to have created for his own purposes. Nicaragua, in 1841, had elected as supreme dictator Don Pablo Buitrago. He was afterward deposed by General Fonseca, who changed the style of the supreme executive to Grand Maréchal. A more disgusting and brutal tyrant never assumed power in Nicaragua. Guatemala, now held in the iron grasp of Carrera, made no attempt upon the tranquillity of the other states other than a descent upon San Salvador in 1844, headed by José Manuel Arce, formerly President of the republic. This was ostensibly in revenge for the countenance given by Malespin to the Morizanistas in 1842. The invaders, however, were routed and driven from the state.

Malespin retaliated for this outrage by invading Guatemala shortly after with two thousand troops, and, had he followed up this advantage, he might possibly have made a successful stand

against the Servile power. He was accompanied in this expedition by General Cabañas, a tried and courageous officer under Morazan, and whose character for humanity and patriotism had become widely known in Central America. On the march the troops declared for this general, who refused to accept a command to the injury of his benefactor. But Malespin, enraged at this preference, commanded a retreat, and disbanded the troops the most favorable to Cabañas.

Carrera meantime collected an army of five thousand men, with which, after this retreat, he invaded San Salvador, but, fearful of his own power in Guatemala, he contented himself with taking several villages, and returned without any important engagement between the two armies having taken place. The war had only the effect of impoverishing both countries. During these campaigns, the forces of Nicaragua, which had been raised with the pretended object of assisting San Salvador, penetrated into Honduras with the design of overthrowing the government of Ferrera. They were met by the troops of Honduras at Choluteca, under the command of Santos Guardiola, and utterly routed. The energy and ferocity of this man became thenceforth a proverb throughout the country.

Peace having been declared between Guatemala and San Salvador in 1844, Malespin determined to revenge himself upon Cabañas for the preference shown that leader by the troops of San Salvador. Forewarned of this movement, Cabañas and his friends escaped to San Miguel, and, uniting with the proscribed Governor Barrios, proceeded to Nicaragua, and succeeded in enlisting Fonseca in their cause. Information of these warlike preparations was conveyed to Malespin, who speedily concluded a treaty with Honduras; Ferrera, who was still at the head of the government, readily forming an alliance against Nicaragua, whose forces had made so unprovoked an attack upon him in the preceding August.

This expedition was mainly planned by Cabañas, whose views were not bounded by the immediate issue with Malespin, though that seemed its ostensible object. From his earliest connection with military affairs he had been an uncompromising supporter of the Federal Republic, and, nobly seconding Morazan in this cause, he had succeeded him at his death as the acknowledged



leader of the Liberal or Republican party. He now looked forward with confidence to the overthrow of Malespin and Ferrera, and from that point an invasion of Guatemala and the re-establishment of the Republic.

In October he invaded Honduras with about two thousand troops, but was met by Guardiola on the 1st of November, and repulsed with considerable loss. A few days afterward he defeated and dispersed a superior force of the enemy, but, owing to an entire want of discipline among his own troops, he was forced to retreat into Nicaragua, where he was followed by the combined forces of Honduras and San Salvador under Guardiola and Malespin. The invading army, amounting to three thousand, laid siege to Leon, now the last stronghold of the Liberal party and of the Morazanistas. The ancient rivalry existing between Granada and Leon induced the inhabitants of the former city, with those of Managua and Rivas, to espouse the cause of the invaders.

A force of three thousand was raised by these cities, and dispatched to the assistance of the besieging party, thus augmented to five thousand men. These auxiliaries arrived toward the close of the year, and Leon was invested on all sides, but defended with the most desperate valor. Scenes of debauchery and terror were enacted in the city too frightful and disgusting to be perpetuated in history. Language fails to describe the horrors enacted even by the besieged themselves, who, driven to extreme phrensy by their sufferings, inaugurated a reign of murder and rapine in which neither age nor sex was spared. The previous history of the country, revolting as some of its episodes had been, presents no equal to the scene. Cabañas, Barrios, and their friends, shrinking in horror from an alliance with such monsters, deserted the city in January, 1845, and left the inhabitants to their fate.

On the following day the city was carried by assault, and given to butchery and plunder by the savage soldiery. The churches afforded no protection to the crowds of wretched fugitives, and these edifices were literally filled with mangled bodies of women and children, and covered with blood. Every dwelling was plundered and completely gutted excepting that of a British subject, Mr. Manning, in whose house the Grand Maré-

chal lay hidden for two days, but in an imprudent attempt to escape was taken by Malespin's troops and immediately put to death. An attempt was made by the victors to burn and to raze the city to the ground, which was only prevented by the solid and detached nature of the buildings ; but the termination of this carousal of blood left Leon a picture of ruin and desolation. Humanity sickens at the bare recital of such atrocities, the results of civil war almost without political aim, and with no other incentive than the love of plunder, revenge, and the gratification of the basest passions.

The republican freeman of the North gazes with astonishment on a people after a quarter of a century of experimental self-government, commenced under the most favorable auspices, and with illustrious examples for guides, relapsing into a condition not excelled in detail of savagery by the most bestial natives of Africa. History scarcely affords a parallel to the picture presented by Central America at this epoch ; every grade of relationship arrayed in frantic hostility—father against son, brother against brother. Justice and humanity seemed swallowed up in a sickening appetite for violation, murder, and plunder. Anarchy, in its most terrible and revolting form, reigned in the land.

Nor can these atrocities be laid to the charge of any particular faction, or to the ferocious commanders who directed them. The people themselves, irrespective of politics or party, are answerable. Neither brutal military leaders nor the acerbity of party warfare could alone excite enormities such as those disgracing the history of Central America, events impossible of occurrence except with the groundwork of a debased and barbarous people.

Cabañas and Barías, after escaping from Leon, arrived in San Salvador, and, collecting an army of a thousand men in their march, reached San Salvador in time to head an insurrection already broken out against the authority of Malespin, most of whose adherents saved themselves by flight. Guzman was placed in the Presidency in January, 1845.

The receipt of this intelligence in Nicaragua caused the troops of San Salvador to desert Malespin, immediately following which Guardiola, with his troops, withdrew into Honduras, accompanied by Malespin, who still hoped to recover possession of San

Salvador. On the 2d of March Guardiola entered the State of San Salvador, and was encountered by Cabañas at Quelepa, between San Miguel and San Salvador. Although possessed of an inferior force, Guardiola gained the victory, and pressed on toward San Vicente, where another engagement occurred, in which both parties claimed the victory. But Cabañas having soon after increased his army to two thousand men, Guardiola was forced to retreat, which he effected in an able manner, eluding pursuit and plundering the towns on his road. A period of negotiations ensued, which only resulted in the forces of San Salvador, under the military command of Cabañas, and those of Honduras, where Malespin had taken refuge, preparing anew for hostilities. Early in May Cabañas invaded Honduras, and took possession of Comayagua on the 8th of June. He was forced to abandon the city a few days afterward, owing to a refusal of the Provisional President, Guzman, to supply him with a tithe of the necessary funds for the support of his troops. Repeated applications from Cabañas for supplies were replied to with recommendations from the government of San Salvador to feed his men by plundering the people, after the customary Central American plan, which Cabañas steadily refused to do. His men deserted in great numbers, though the inhabitants, pleased and astonished at his moderation, furnished him with occasional supplies. But the near approach of Guardiola left him no alternative but retreat, afterward hastened into a flight, with a scanty remnant of his army.

On reaching San Miguel, Cabañas was not long in ascertaining that Guzman was secretly conspiring against him, and had purposely refused the supplies to his army with the view of ruining him. Here he attempted in vain to collect his scattered forces to oppose the entrance of Guardiola, who was now pressing toward the city, which he entered and took possession of on the 22d of July, Cabañas evacuating it on the previous day. The brutal excesses of Guardiola had inspired the inhabitants with such terror that they abandoned the city before his arrival, and San Miguel was completely sacked by his troops. A plan formed for the capture of San Salvador, in conjunction with Honduras, was not acted upon, owing to the inability of that state to raise the requisite funds and troops.

Cabañas meanwhile had resigned his command in disgust, and Guzman, the Provisional President, being known as a coward, no one was found to assume the military leadership. Ferrera was excommunicated by the Bishop of San Salvador, as was also Malespin. This, however, had little effect in staying the disturbances; the Coquimbos, as the old partisans of Morazan continued to be called, the friends of the bishop, and those of President Guzman, forming three distinct parties in San Salvador, who consumed the time in fruitless disputes, while Guardiola and his troops ravaged the adjacent country. The negotiations for peace between the two states were at times interrupted by military excursions, characterized by the instant butchery of all prisoners, amounting in two instances to over one hundred. Between the months of October and December several bloody engagements had occurred, and San Miguel had been plundered a second time by Guardiola. On the 20th of December peace was concluded between San Salvador and Honduras.

During 1844 Guatemala was the scene of two insurrections, both of which were suppressed. Since the dissolution of the Representative Assembly in 1844, Carrera had exercised the functions of President and military commander. On the 1st of January, 1845, he formally assumed the office. In February of this year his authority was seriously menaced by an insurrection of the remnants of the old aristocracy and the priesthood, who, since the unexpected assumption of power by Carrera in 1829, had nursed a secret hostility to his government. This revolt was nominally headed by General Monte Rosas; but, though the cowardly behavior of Carrera and the seizure of nearly all the arms in the state placed him in a position to sustain himself, the timidity of those who had at first encouraged the insurrection prevented its consummation. After holding possession of Guatemala four days, Rosas was induced to withdraw for the sum of \$5000. On the following day Sotero Carrera, brother of the President, pursued the insurgents, and attacked and killed a great number, who were awaiting Carrera's arrival to lay down their arms. On the breaking out of this revolt, Carrera fled affrighted to a distant hacienda, whence he only returned on its suppression. He inaugurated his restoration to power by putting to death, without form of trial, ten persons sus-



pected to have been concerned in the insurrection. A feeble, ill-organized plan was laid, in July of the same year, to shoot Carrera as he was coming out of the Cathedral, but was frustrated by its early discovery.

From this time, all attempts to dislodge this leader were abandoned. The consolidation of his power inclined him to relax the severity of his government. Don Joaquin Duran, a talented and liberal man, was appointed to the ministry, and the state, under a judicious and evenly administered rule, began to progress in wealth and industry. The government, however, was in all respects that of an absolute monarchy, in which the liberty, prosperity, and lives of the people were at the entire disposal of Carrera.

In San Salvador the election of President took place in the month of March, which resulted in the choice of Don Eugénio Aguilar, a man of unblemished character and known moderation. On the following July the Bishop of San Salvador attempted an insurrection against the new President, but, proving unsuccessful, he was banished from the state. During 1845 Honduras continued quiet, but in the following year the administration of Ferrera resigned their offices, and at an election, held in July, Señor Gaul was chosen to the presidency. Nicaragua, after the allied invasion of 1844-5, was reduced to a condition of stagnation and misery even below the level of the other states. In December, 1845, Sandoval was elected Director, but so powerless and impoverished was the government that it was unable to enforce obedience to the laws, or to repel the piratical incursions from San Salvador, made into the most populous sections of the state. Costa Rica remained under the rule of Rafael Gallegos through 1845 up to July of the following year, when this chief was deposed, and José Maria Alfaro elevated to his place.

Few events of importance occurred in 1846. An unsuccessful attempt was made to reconstruct the Confederation of States. The convention of delegates from the various states was appointed to meet at Sonsonate, in San Salvador, on the 15th of May, but on that day the representatives only of San Salvador and Costa Rica were present, those of Honduras and Nicaragua arriving some days later. The Guatemalan depu-

ties did not appear until the middle of July, and one of those of Costa Rica having died meanwhile, and the other refusing to act alone, the Convention dispersed without the accomplishment of their object. Another attempt was made in 1847, by calling a Convention of the States in Nacaome, in Honduras; but only Honduras, San Salvador, and Nicaragua being represented, these deputies organized a Federal republic consisting of those three states. Being a loose and ill-constructed arrangement, this confederation, known as the "Pact of Nacaome," did not go into effect. In 1849 these states again appointed Federal deputies, and agreed upon a plan of confederation, inviting the co-operation of Guatemala and Costa Rica. In January, 1851, this body met in Chinandega, Nicaragua, and formally declared the "National Representation of Central America;" but this, like its predecessors, was destined to but short duration.

The recollection of thirty years of incessant strife has thoroughly imbued the people of Costa Rica with a dread of alliances of any kind with the neighboring states. From 1846, the state has shown an example to her compeers of industry and general progress. Under the liberal and benign government of the Moras, its advancement has been truly encouraging. Numerous arrivals of intelligent bodies of Europeans have rapidly developed its resources, while the sudden growth of California has opened a constant market for its agricultural productions. It is mainly owing to its remote position from the body of the states, and to the energy and example of its foreign residents, that Costa Rica has surpassed every other part of Central America in the useful arts.

In 1848 Señor Juan Lindo was elected to the Presidency of Honduras and Santos Guardiola appointed Secretary of State. Under this administration the present Constitution was formed, which, though an interval of government under the Republican Union of the three states, as before described, intervened, has continued to be the standard political basis of the state. Toward the commencement of 1849 an attempt at insurrection, on the part of Guardiola, resulted in his expulsion from the state, being replaced in office by Señor José Maria Rugame. Placing himself at the head of a body of troops, Guardiola assumed a menacing attitude toward the government. Prompt measures were

taken to suppress this movement, which was finally accomplished without bloodshed. Guardiola, however, did not regain his political position in Honduras.

Guatemala continued under the nominal presidency of Carrera, and San Salvador, with few political changes, remained at peace with the other states. In 1850 the quadrennial presidential election in Honduras occurred, and no candidate receiving an absolute majority of the popular vote, the names of the two highest candidates were submitted to the Legislature, as provided in the Constitution of 1848. The choice fell upon General José Trinidad Cabañas, whose character and public services



JOSÉ TRINIDAD CABAÑAS.

have been elsewhere referred to. Humane and moderate in his policy, a distinguished partisan of the Morazan school, and now recognized as the leader of the Liberal party, his election was

celebrated throughout the country as a peculiarly auspicious event, and the surest safeguard against the threatened encroachments of Guatemala, whose aggressive tendencies were now watched with anxiety and alarm.\*

The most eminent of the few remaining public men of the state were called to the cabinet. Salutory decrees were issued for the encouragement of agriculture, commerce, and mining enterprises, and appropriations from the public treasury for educational purposes were made with greater liberality than had been known since the Independence. The tempestuous era of politics seemed to have given place to a calm, from which the people augured a happy and prosperous future. The public events of importance in the years 1850-51 were confined to some insurrectionary attempts by Guardiola and Juan Lopez. Both of these factious spirits had fled to Guatemala, where they made constant efforts to organize a force sufficient to overturn the government of Cabañas. Lopez, in an unsuccessful expedition, was captured and imprisoned in the castle of Omoa, whence he shortly afterward effected his escape in company with the robber Urmansor.

That the government of Guatemala had long entertained designs against the independence of Honduras, the avowed policy of Carrera and the tone of the official press sufficiently prove. An alliance with Mexico would have been assisted by a large number of influential persons in Guatemala. This course, though inconsistent with the jealous rule of Carrera, would have advanced the original object of the wealthy Guatemalan fam-

\* The life of Cabañas would form a history of active but unfortunate efforts in behalf of his country, but unstained by any act of injustice or cruelty, while his humanity is attested by numerous interesting anecdotes. A brief biography of him, given me by a gentleman of Guatemala, states that he was born in Comayagua in October, 1802. His father was Don José Maria Cabañas, and his mother a lady of the Fiallos family, of the city of his birth. He commenced his studies in Comayagua, and entered the university of that city. The party divisions immediately following the Independence found him an ardent supporter of the Liberal or Republican cause, in which he enlisted at first as a common soldier, and as such served in the army of San Salvador, defending the capital of that state against the Imperialists under General Manuel José Arce, in June, 1822. During his many campaigns, and throughout his whole military course, observes his biographer, "he has never committed a murder or a personal or political excess. His enemies themselves point to some errors of judgment, but to no violation of the principles of honor which distinguish the brave and upright man."



ilies, the restoration of the titled nobility, and the revival of the effete aristocratic institutions. Such traitorous plans were ascribed to the refugees Guardiola and Lopez, who openly advocated the dependence of the provinces upon a Guatemalan viceroyalty. It was against this treason that Barrundia would have guarded in his proposed union of the States. With such views, Guatemala, confident in its strength and numerical superiority, availed itself of the first pretext to commence hostilities against Honduras.

Early in 1852, numerous *facciosos* had collected near the eastern borders of Honduras, in the extreme Guatemalan Department of Chiquimula. These malcontents were composed of refugees from the brutality of Carrera, bands of marauding Indians, and reckless outcasts of every denomination, common to many unfrequented sections of Central America. In one of their many expeditions a number of these had crossed into Honduras, and penetrated to the town of Copan, where they were located for some months.

Information of this reaching the military commander of that district, General Zelaya, he notified the government at Comayagua of the fact, when the disaffected were promptly put down by the orders of Cabañas, as an evidence to Guatemala that the territory of Honduras could not be made an asylum for insurrectionists to carry on aggressions against the neighboring states. In these proceedings, in order to guard against the implication of an armed invasion of Guatemala, and to avoid the possibility of a misconstruction of his motives, Cabañas strictly restrained the forces of Honduras from advancing beyond the frontier, confining the operations of the troops to expelling the enemies of Guatemala from Honduras territory. With such efficiency and moderation were the military measures of Honduras characterized, that the official organ of Guatemala could not refrain from paying a deserved tribute to the sense of justice and rectitude that had animated them. Cabañas shortly afterward disbanded his troops, the laudable object for which they had been organized having been accomplished. Nothing had occurred to this date to interrupt the harmonious relations subsisting between Guatemala and Honduras.

In October, one of the insurrectionary movements common to

the retired districts of Guatemala broke out in the Department of Chiquimula. The insurgents, consisting of Indians and a considerable body of half-breeds, attacked and plundered the town of Gualan, and afterward robbed and murdered the inhabitants of a large hacienda six leagues distant. Loaded with the plunder of Gualan, and having cruelly murdered the secretary of the department for refusing to deliver the keys of the treasury, they fled into Honduras, closely pursued by General Solares, with several hundred men, who succeeded in dispersing them. This result effected, the invaders continued their march to the town of Copan, in the Department of Gracias, where, without provocation, the most brutal excesses were perpetrated in alleged retaliation for an invasion of Guatemalan territory by General Zelaya! Inoffensive people were murdered in the streets, crops destroyed, houses pillaged, and the surrounding country desolated by the soldiery.

These outrages, committed in time of profound peace, aroused the indignation of Honduras. Official remonstrances were unheeded, and after numerous ineffectual efforts to obtain redress, measures of retaliation were adopted by Cabañas. The government of Guatemala, fully anticipating this movement, prepared to meet the attack. It was evident that Carrera, restrained a while by the past few years of tranquillity, still nursing the hope of subjugating the adjoining states, had created this pretext of war to light anew the torch of discord and murder throughout Central America.

Cabañas, having collected a considerable force, marched to the frontier, and after lengthy negotiations succeeded, in April, 1853, in forming a convention at Esquipulas, by commissioners on the part of both republics, by which Guatemala agreed to indemnify the sufferers by the recent outrages, and providing for the liberation of prisoners and the negotiation of a treaty of amity at the earliest period. The signing of this treaty on the part of the Guatemalan commissioners was a virtual recognition of the injustice of the invasion by Solares and his subsequent career of plunder. But after months of delay, of which Carrera availed himself to make extensive preparations for aggressive purposes, Guatemala, with characteristic perfidy, suddenly announced her refusal to abide by the terms of the convention;

when Cabañas, in turn, marched into that state, having been invested by the Legislature with temporary absolute power to declare war and raise the means of prosecuting it. He occupied and held possession of the Department of Chiquimula, enforcing the utmost moderation among his soldiers, until a vastly superior force obliged him to retreat into Honduras, where he was followed by the enemy under General Grenados. In July the Guatemalan forces occupied Santa Rosa, and after wantonly sacking the town, re-enacting the horrors of León and San Miguel, retreated precipitately out of the country, as much in anticipation of attack from the desperate inhabitants as from the starving desolation of the district consequent upon the pillage and destruction waged by his followers.

The rest of Central America, throughout the years 1852-3, had remained quiet spectators of the events transpiring between Honduras and Guatemala, the issues being, for the present, confined to those two states. Costa Rica, availing itself of the long period of quiet ensuing on the destruction of the Morazan party, had reached a degree of prosperity before unknown in its history. San Salvador, though preserving her bitter hatred of Carrera, and strongly sympathizing with the Liberal party in Honduras, refrained from active participation in the strife.

In Nicaragua, since 1849, the government had passed respectively through the hands of Ramierez (Supreme Director), of Barrundia (as President of the National Representation of Central America), and of Pineda (as President of the Republic). The death of Pineda, toward the close of 1852, revived the elements of discord in Nicaragua, which, however, resulted in the elevation of the former Secretary of State, Fruto Chamorro, to the provisional dictatorship of the state, with an administration consisting of Rocha, Secretary of the Interior, Corral, Minister of War, and Francisco Castellon as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The biennial election for President having arrived, the two principal candidates offering themselves for this office were Chamorro, the imbodiment of the old Servile faction with its anti-progressive and exclusive policy, and Castellon, a man of excellent character, enlarged views, and committed to the same line of liberal policy with Cabañas. He had chiefly distinguished himself, while Nicaraguan minister to England, by his corre-

spondence with Lord Palmerston on the subject of the Mosquito Protectorate, in which he triumphantly carried his case (so far as argument was concerned) against his lordship. The election resulted in favor of Chamorro, who has been accused, and probably with justice, of using fraud and coercive measures at the polls.

The administration of Chamorro commenced with numerous oppressive enactments, among which was the suppression of the Supreme Court and the virtual assumption of the supreme dictatorial power. The open advocacy of Castellon of the re-establishment of the republic, and the alleged discovery of letters from him to certain disaffected parties in San Salvador and Honduras, caused his arrest and speedy banishment. With a number of partisans he took refuge in Honduras, where his known liberal principles secured him a cordial reception by Cabañas.

The war in Honduras had meanwhile been prosecuted with a malignity on the part of Guatemala in conformity with the brutal character of Carrera. In addition to unceasing depredations along the frontier, an attack was made, in the summer of 1853, upon the town and fort of Omoa, which yielded in July to the Guatemalan forces under Colonel Zavila, who invaded the place by sea. The castle surrendered under articles of capitulation that the artillery of the place should remain deposited in the keeping of Mr. Follen, U. S. Consul at Omoa, and that the Guatemalan forces should evacuate the port within three days, but with the express stipulation that none of the artillery should be removed.

In defiance of these agreements, the dismantling of the castle was commenced on the day preceding the evacuation, and would have been completed but for the protest of the U. S. Consul. Five long brass six-pounders and two ten-inch mortars were embarked, and conveyed through the port of Habal to Teleman on the Polochic River. An expedition, commanded in person by Carrera, and consisting of twelve hundred men, left Guatemala in November, 1853, to conduct these trophies to that city. From Teleman they were dragged, with incredible labor, over mountains and across rivers, to Tactic, a distance of twenty-two leagues. The expedition, which was two months on the road,



lost nearly a third of its number in this march, owing to desperate assaults from “*faciosos*” and marauding tribes inhabiting Vera Paz. For five years that department had been desolated by hostile and unconquerable Indians, whose depredations had been so inhumanly visited upon Honduras. Feeble efforts were made, toward the close of 1853, by San Salvador for the restoration of peace between the two republics, but without success.

The position of Cabañas, as the principal remaining stay of the Liberal party after the death of Morazan, did not permit him to remain an inactive spectator of the events transpiring in Nicaragua, where the Servile cause, secretly aided by Guatemalan and European agents, had slowly acquired a dangerous prominence. The banishment of Castellon and the principal Liberals of Nicaragua had been followed by a succession of oppressive measures on the part of Chamorro utterly subversive of the liberties of the people. Early in 1854 Cabañas furnished his friend and partisan with a few men and a quantity of arms and ammunition, with which Castellon repaired to Tigre Island, whence the troops, under the command of General Maximo Jerez, entered Nicaragua in the month of May by the port of Realejo, while Castellon, passing the Playa Grande military establishment in disguise, joined the invaders, who were received with unanimous marks of favor by the people. Leon, Chinandega, and the adjacent towns immediately declared for Castellon, who was created Provisional Director of the State, taking the oath of office on the 11th of June.

His discourse on this occasion was moderate in expression, but significant in substance. He advocated the widest tolerance in all that concerns opinion, and maintained the doctrine that the executive should always reflect fairly the popular will. His liberal policy, and determination to reconstruct, if possible, the Federal Republic, may be inferred from the following extract from this address :

“My programme in all that concerns the state interiorly is liberty—liberty for each man to enjoy all of his natural and legal rights, to discharge his duties without interference, to enjoy freely the fruits of his own industry and enterprise. In all that concerns exterior relations, I am disposed to cultivate the best

intelligence with all nations, and especially with the various states of Central America. I am in favor of the maintenance of peace, *and to this end, in favor of the establishment of a general union upon sound and well-understood principles.*"

Chamorro was driven to his native city of Granada, where the Servile tendencies and the ancient jealousy of the rival city of Leon insured him a welcome and an almost impregnable stronghold. Here he fortified himself, and an irregular siege by thrice his own number of the Liberal or Democratic forces under Jerez was maintained until the early part of 1855.

Pending these hostilities, Castellon had gained the entire possession of Nicaragua, excepting the invested city of Granada; but the protracted nature of the siege, and the utter prostration of all branches of industry consequent upon the war, gradually wearied and disgusted a people generally unstable in their political prejudices. The important towns of Managua, Masaya, and Rivas were recaptured by the Chamorro or Legitimate party in a series of bloody engagements. At this time Chamorro died, and his place as nominal president, or leader of the "Legitimistas," was assumed by Estrada, under whose rule the Servile power became partially re-established throughout the state, except in the Department Occidental, where the unalterable Liberal politics of the people still upheld the power of Castellon.

A brief review of the past thirty years from this point exhibits Central America torn by intestine wars, waged by various political aspirants for power or plunder, no fewer than *four hundred persons* having exercised the supreme power under the Federal or State governments, with the titles of presidents, governors, directors, chiefs, or officials holding position under them. Here it would have been well for these frantic destroyers of one of the most beautiful and fertile countries in the world to pause, and by a fraternal harmony to have rebuilt among themselves the fabric they had blindly dragged to ruins. There were those who, gazing fearfully abroad from amid the smoke of anarchical war, saw the approach of an element which, once invoked, would eventually dissipate the petty sectional questions of the day for a greater and more vital issue—that of nationality—between the Latin races and that predestined pow-

er whose advance over the fairest portions of Mexico had already begot a gloomy presentiment of extinction before the tread of the Anglo-Saxon! But they failed to learn even from their enemies the secret of their decline or the only avenue to regeneration.

Toward the close of 1854, Castellon, wearied with the fruitless struggle, and alarmed at the reactionary tendencies of the people, sent proposals to California for the enlistment of North Americans in the Nicaraguan war, and in May of the following year, the negotiations having been completed, Colonel William Walker, with fifty-six followers, sailed in the brig *Vesta* for Central America, and, landing at Realejo on the 11th of June, the anniversary of Castellon's inaugural address, formally enlisted in the Nicaraguan army. The result of the introduction of these auxiliaries was the speedy overthrow of the Servile power and the restoration of the Liberal party, Walker assuming the command of the army, and thus virtually holding the reins of government. Hundreds of adventurers joined the fortunes of the Americans. The adjoining republics gazed with alarm upon this unexpected phase in their political horizon. Alliances were formed between the states for the extermination of the foreigners, and at last the party issues of the day began to disappear before the more momentous one of national existence.

From the commencement of the Castellon revolution in Nicaragua, Cabañas had lent every encouragement to the Liberal cause in that state. Faithful to the principles he had advocated from the earliest republican history of the country, he looked hopefully to the restoration of the Confederation of States, in his opinion the only form of government under which Central America could long preserve its existence. The war with Guatemala was still continued, and thus, menaced from that quarter, he has been much blamed for his participation in the quarrels of Nicaragua; but his policy was confined to one great object, the re-establishment of the Republic, and to him no honorable efforts were unwarranted for its accomplishment.

In the mean time, the traitors Lopez and Guardiola were meditating in Guatemala an incursion against Cabañas, assisted by the Indian hordes they had collected in that republic. The con-

summation of their movements was retarded for some months by the general favor shown by the people to the administration of Cabañas, and the lack of funds by these conspirators. The war, however, was continued by predatory excursions on the part of both states. Hostilities were on the wane toward the close of 1853, and the President improved this short interval to give such encouragement to the commercial and industrial progress of the state as the impoverished condition of the country would permit. But the war had paralyzed every branch of trade, and the distress thus caused was increased by the scourge of locusts passing in vast clouds over Central America, sweeping away, as by a conflagration, every green thing, and leaving famine and desolation in their path.

Although, as a Spanish American, Cabañas was personally opposed, at the commencement of his administration, to the encouragement of enterprises through which strangers would be likely to obtain a dangerous ascendancy in Central America, he was gradually induced, by the influence of Señors Cacho and Mejia, his ministers, to dismiss these objections. In the midst of his harassing campaign in Gracias, in the month of July, he found time to turn his attention toward the Inter-oceanic Railway project; and to Cabañas should be ascribed the double honor of conquering his inborn prejudices against foreigners, and of giving the principal impulse to an enterprise likely to assume an importance second to none in the present age.

Actuated by the same laudable intentions, and penetrated with the conviction that only through Northern industry and enterprise can the Spanish-American races be raised to a permanent grade of prosperity, Señor Barrundia, then far advanced in years, and frequently referred to in this sketch as a talented and zealous member of the Liberal party, was dispatched to Washington, as the first diplomatic agent ever sent to the United States by Honduras as a distinct power.\* His death, at New

\* No worthier testimonial of the beneficent views of the government at this time can be asked than the accompanying translation of Barrundia's presentation address to President Pierce, at Washington, on the 29th of May, 1854:

“Mr. President, I have the honor to present herewith to your excellency my credentials as Minister Plenipotentiary of Honduras near the government of the United States. Their object is to put me in a position to establish an intimate and fraternal relationship between Honduras and the American nation. The



York, on the 6th of August of the same year, put an untimely end to the negotiations, and frustrated the dawning hopes of the Liberals. The invasion by Guardiola, shortly after the news of this calamity reached Honduras, prevented the appointment of another envoy, a consummation since rendered the more hopeless by the utter overthrow of Cabañas and his party.

peculiar circumstances of Honduras—the struggle in which she has been plunged by her generous efforts to re-establish the national Union and the liberty of Central America—efforts unfortunately frustrated—her sympathy and admiration for the great and free people which here presents to the world a palpable and unprecedented example of progress in a government purely republican, and a practical and demonstrative refutation of the ideas of those who treat all democratic organizations as Utopian; impressed with a merited appreciation of the generosity which always accompanies intelligence and power, when combined, as they are in the United States—all these are circumstances which give gravity to the mission which my government has confided to me, and which looks to ends the most important, both for the United States and for Honduras, as well as to the further development of American policy. The mission with which I am charged is perhaps more significant than any which has yet originated in Central America, and its objects are such as are seldom confided to an ordinary legation. It relates to the vital interests of an American people, struggling against the antagonism of monarchical principles, which unfortunately, in some parts of this continent, are seeking to change the blessings of liberty and independence for alien protectorates and irresponsible dictatorships. I assure your excellency that it will afford me the highest satisfaction to treat in reference to these important matters with the eminent officers of this republic, destined by their influence and abilities to place the American people in harmonious relations with each other, and to extend their liberty and augment their prosperity. Honduras has opened its doors, and lent its co-operation to an enterprise of vast importance to the interests of the world—I refer to a free communication between the two oceans. She offers her commodious ports, her salubrious climate, and her great but undeveloped resources to the aid of this undertaking, and freely offers her rich and fertile territory to the enterprise and industry of the American people. Honduras should be forever the friend and sister of the United States, and she looks hopefully to the latter for the support of her liberty and independence. May the Eternal Disposer of events link together the people of both by the unalterable tie of interest and future mutual prosperity! I shall experience the greatest satisfaction in contributing the first step to this result, and in giving to the government of which your excellency is the head the evidences of the earnest solicitude of Honduras to establish a true and intimate fraternity with the United States, in such a form that both nations may have a single interest for the common cause of liberty, and in such a manner that Honduras may proceed to develop her latent elements of prosperity, and to improve the advantages of a position eminently favored by Nature, without a fear of disturbance for the future, either from civil discord or exterior aggression. Should such a fortunate result be attained, Honduras will yet present, in the centre of the commercial world, the glorious spectacle of a free and prosperous people sustained by the generosity of the great American republic.”

Early in 1854 General Francisco Gomez, one of the bravest of Cabañas's officers, was sent with eight hundred men into Nicaragua, to assist in supporting the Liberal cause in that state, the greater part of whom fell in the siege of Granada, or were destroyed by a malignant fever at that time decimating the entire population. The mountaineers of Honduras, at all times fearful of the "tierra caliente" of Nicaragua, were almost annihilated by the fatal disease. The brave Gomez was among its earliest victims, and in the panic created by these ravages, the emissaries of the opposite party were charged with poisoning the springs. The few who made their escape by deserting returned to Honduras with a settled aversion to all future military expeditions. Their example was contagious, and Cabañas, threatened by Guatemala, found himself unable to raise the necessary troops to protect the western frontier.

The efforts of Guardiola were now redoubled, and in November he entered the Department of Gracias, where he issued proclamations to the people of Honduras denouncing the administration of Cabañas, and marking his way with plunder and murder. Every exertion was made by the government to meet this inroad. Unwilling to adopt the customary method of forcible contributions, Cabañas imposed additional impositions on stamped paper, and by other legitimate means attempted to augment his resources, while patriotic appeals were made in the official gazette for voluntary assistance from the inhabitants; but it appears that the utter selfishness of the people had blighted every national sentiment and clipped the wings of patriotism.

The co-operation of San Salvador, which had been confidently expected under the administration of President San Martin, was withheld, owing to disputes artfully nourished by Guatemala relative to the supposed sale to Americans by Honduras of the island of Mianguerra, in the Bay of Fonseca, and belonging to San Salvador. The extraordinary liberality of Cabañas in encouraging foreign enterprise was also now used against him by his enemies with fearful effect. Overtures were made to North Americans in Honduras for the enlistment of Californians in the Liberal cause, but unsuccessfully.

For some months the Liberal party had watched the movements of Carrera with well-grounded alarm. Since the previous

year, a party had arisen who openly advocated Carrera as perpetual president or dictator with extraordinary powers. Some difference existed among the departments of Guatemala as to the extent of these powers; but the majority, consisting of his Indian adherents and those families who hoped by such a change to re-establish the *noblesse*, were in favor of absolutism, and there were not wanting those who espoused an imperialty.

On the 18th of May, 1854, it became known that the initiatory steps would be taken in the city of Guatemala, and to give the semblance of having exerted no undue influence, Carrera retired to an estate on the Pacific coast. The municipal officers could not agree, but, notwithstanding this feeling, the pronunciamiento was made on the 23d, and signed by some two hundred Indians, some of the clergy and citizens, and by a few of the authorities, but not in their official capacities. The success of the movement was mainly attributed to Aycinena, Minister of State. A procession proceeded to the Cathedral, where the *Te Deum* was sung, but the whole proceeding was regarded with coldness by the people. The ceremonies of inauguration occurred on the 21st of October, and the ensuing evening the event was celebrated with illuminations and salvos of artillery. As this was believed to be but the preliminary step to the establishment of a Guatemalan empire, and the subsequent absorption of the adjacent states, renewed efforts were made to organize a general movement against the Servile power, but fruitlessly. The issue between Guatemala and Mexico, as to the right to the Department of Soconusco, forming a portion of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and seized in 1843 by Mexico, was finally settled early in this year by the cession to Mexico for \$420,000, payable in four installments, of the entire claim of Guatemala to Soconusco and Chiapas.

Late in the year, Cabañas, with his army, left Tegucigalpa, where the government had been located during 1854, and, passing through Comayagua, collected his entire forces, and stationed himself at Santa Rosa, in the Department of Gracias. His departure was the signal for active secret measures against him on the part of the principal Servile families in Tegucigalpa, and from this time may be dated the downfall of his administration. His term of office expiring at this time, Cabañas expressed his

desire that the candidates for the succession should be subjected to the test of the popular vote, under the provisions of the Constitution. To this the infamous Guardiola, who aimed at the supreme power, would not have assented, had he even been a peaceful aspirant to the office, for a lifetime of barbarous murders had rendered his name a terror and symbol of detestation to all Central America. Efforts were made at this time, by the government of San Salvador to restore peace between the two republics, by the appointment of Señor Maximo Soto as a commissioner, but ineffectually.

An attempt to press men from the Department of Olancho gave rise, about this time, to disturbances amounting to open rebellion. The alarming immigration of the inhabitants of that section toward the coast induced the government to issue a decree, prohibiting, under heavy penalties, all Olanchanos from leaving the department. This produced the impression that the law was in retaliation for the refusal to recruit the army; and though, in January, the authorities issued a manifesto acknowledging their allegiance, a general revolt occurred a few months later, in which the administration of Cabañas was denounced by a large majority of the people.

The year 1855 found Honduras still at war with Guatemala, and the remaining republics making feeble exertions to restore the belligerents to amicable terms. Such efforts were futile, from the known determination of Guardiola to attain the supreme power in the state. In January, Cabañas advanced with his forces to Sensenti, where, in connection with General Mille, he twice defeated detachments of the invaders, and obliged them to retire into Guatemala. The enemy, however, shortly after re-entered the country, re-enforced by Generals Lopez and Medina. The latter was in command of the castle of Omoa when surrendered to Colonel Zavala in 1853, since which he had been suspected by Cabañas of treachery on that occasion. His subsequent desertion and enlistment with the enemy verified the suspicion. A temporary cessation of hostilities took place at this juncture, President San Martin, of San Salvador, having acted as a mediator between the parties. To facilitate this, Cabañas retired temporarily from the frontier, but the invaders proposing the accession of Guardiola to the presidency without





SANTOS GUARDIOLA.

the ordeal of the ballot-box, the negotiations at once ceased, and the Guatemalan forces renewed their local reign of terror in the region of Ocotepeque, committing excesses which are described in the *Gaceta Oficial* of that date as “beyond description for their horror and enormity.”

Cabañas, however, found himself unable to cope with the daily increasing forces of the enemy, who, carrying terror and dismay in their path, extorted the supplies from the inhabitants refused to the milder demands of the Liberals. He was finally obliged to retreat into San Salvador, and the Servile government was again established in Honduras under Lopez. Guardiola subsequently repaired to Nicaragua, and in the following September was defeated by Walker's troops at Virgin Bay, after which he returned to his native state and assumed the presidency. Se-

ñors Cacho and Mejia, the Ministers of Finance and State under Cabañas, were immediately seized and tried for "malfeasance in office."

It was a few months previous to this time, as has been already narrated, that the co-operation of North Americans was obtained by Castellon in the Liberal or Democratic cause in Nicaragua. On the establishment of the Rivas-Walker government in October, relying on the sympathy of these American auxiliaries, Cabañas visited Granada, and applied for men and arms to depose the usurper Guardiola. While pointing to the generous self-sacrifice he had made in 1854 in support of Castellon and the Liberal cause, he asked a substantial recognition of his own claims, and the assistance of the Americans to enforce them.

It was not, however, in the power of the new government to extend such aid—its own existence but problematical, and environed with hostile neighbors. Cabañas, keenly alive to the alleged ingratitude of those in whose cause he had lost all, retired without ceremony from Granada, the determined enemy of the American party in Central America. The course of Guardiola thenceforth has been that of an ignorant and unscrupulous tyrant. Imitating the policy of Carrera, but surpassing even him in personal brutality, he is regarded by the people as an instrument in the hands of the Guatemalan government, at all times prepared to sacrifice the liberties of Honduras to its demands.\*

\* "He is a dark-colored mestizo, stout built, and rather corpulent, his face expressing his fiendish temper, but well liked by the soldiers, whom he indulges in every way. To his habits of intoxication may be added every species of vice which can be named among the vicious inhabitants of Central America; and frequently, in his drunken fits, he orders people to be shot who have in nothing offended him, while at all times the most trifling expression, incautiously uttered, is sufficient to cause the babbler to be shot without mercy. In private life he is as brutal as can well be imagined. In all the towns through which he passes, he makes a habit of calling in the best-looking women he can see, and, after subjecting them to infamous treatment, he drives them forth with the most insulting epithets; yet he is certainly the best and most successful general of any now existing, and, probably, of any who have appeared in Central America. Like Marius, the Roman leader, his brutal manners serve to terrify the enemy; hence, while the arrival of Cabañas and most of the other leaders is looked upon without fear by the people of the contending states, the bare mention of the name of Guardiola is sufficient to make the inhabitants fly to the woods, leaving every thing behind them."—*Dunlop's Travels in Central America*, p. 237.

There remains little to be written of the history of Central America. The invasion of Nicaragua by the forces of Costa Rica, and the disastrous issue of that expedition; the diplomatic relations arising between the new government of Nicaragua and the United States; the elevation of Walker to the presidency, and the alliance of the states against his government, are events transpiring in 1856, and must hereafter be subjects of more detailed history.

It will be seen that the main cause of the devastating wars of Central America has been the division of the states into irreconcilable parties, one advocating the continuance of the obsolete forms of the Spanish viceroyalty and the revival of the extinct aristocratical institutions of the colonial period, and the other, emulous of the astonishing progress of the United States under a purely republican government, vainly attempting to establish a similar system, and shedding their best blood in the thirty years' struggle to that end.

Of the patriotic motives of the Liberals, scarcely one among the few native and foreign writers upon the politics of Central America but pay a deserved tribute to their earnest exertions in behalf of their country. An English author includes in the Liberal party some few who had been distinguished men under the monarchy, the greater portion of the legal and medical professions, or, in other words, the *élite* of the University, who had preferred those studies to that of theology or canons, not so much as a means of support as because they are almost the only careers open to those who reject the ecclesiastical vocation. "It also numbered many merchants and landed proprietors, supported by a numerous body composed of the more intelligent artisans and laborers. Their leaders were men of very decided democratical principles, of unquestionable ability, and, considering the school they were brought up in, and the influence that surrounded them, they manifested no small amount of true patriotism and devotedness to their convictions; though, alas! in too many instances stained with venality, and even with deeds of oppression and blood. What they overthrew and what they accomplished for the state is honorable alike to their talents and their sentiments; and though the limits of a sketch will scarcely admit of a due appreciation of it, a cursory view of their



achievements, taking into consideration the circumstances of the people and of the times, will probably excite more wonder, and certainly merits higher praise, than the victories of Alvarado."

Since Guardiola's usurpation of the supreme power in Honduras, the state has assumed a temporary importance abroad, by the arrangement of a treaty between its government and that of Great Britain, by which the Central American question was finally settled, the Bay Islands restored to the republic, and the British protectorate withdrawn from the Mosquito Territory. The communication of Señor Alvarado, Honduras minister to Great Britain, announcing to his government the conclusion of the treaty, is dated London, September 15, 1856. The principal feature in the Convention was the right accorded to the inhabitants of the Bay Islands to maintain their own municipal government, to be administered by legislative, executive, and judicial officers of their own election, trial by jury in their own courts, freedom of religious belief and worship, public and private, exemption from military service except for their own defense, and from all taxation on real or other property beyond such as may be imposed by their own municipality, and collected for the treasury of the same, and to be applied to the common benefit.

The stipulations concerning religious freedom and trial by jury are thus forced on Honduras, and furnish the germs from which these eminently Anglo-Saxon ideas must eventually spread to the main land. Under the Federal republic, the attempt to introduce this gave rise to the sanguinary conflicts between the authorities and the Indians, who then, as now, were incapable of appreciating its benefits. The privileges thus accorded to an integral portion of the state afford the first instance of the establishment in Central America of republican institutions which are not subject to overthrow at the caprice of temporary rulers.

There seems little likelihood, however, of such advantages extending to the main land during the administration of Guardiola, who has recently caused special laws to be enacted prohibiting the entrance of foreigners into the interior country, under whatever consideration, and jealously excluding Americans from even a residence at the sea-ports. This policy, so directly op-



posite to the progressive course of Cabañas, can only terminate with the revival and establishment of the old Liberal cause.

At no period in the history of Central America has Nicaragua presented a more remarkable spectacle than during the year 1856. In that time, by an extraordinary series of events, a new element has been introduced, and the entire fabric of government under the old forms has been overturned. The events transpiring since the success of the Democratic party, aided by American auxiliaries, have passed with such startling rapidity that political and social results have been attained in months, which, under ordinary circumstances, can only occur in years. That Central America demands the rule of an iron hand, of a power not tyrannical, but firm, and even arbitrary, the history of the past thirty years sufficiently shows. Whether the country would be benefited to a greater extent, and the people governed more equitably by a native or foreign ruler, it is not difficult to say, particularly if the newer element carry with it the germs of civilization and industry, names which have been fast disappearing in Nicaragua before the destroying wars conducted by ignorant and rapacious leaders.

The government which for a year past has been struggling for supremacy under Anglo-Saxon auspices seems to be regarded as a usurpation or a revivifying element, according to the temporary partisanship or prejudices of the inhabitants. Independent of the class which there, as in all countries, may be moved, by direct influences, in favor of any successful party, the mass of the natives, impoverished by a lifetime of bloodshed and terror, ask but for a stable government, with the ability to suppress factious chieftains, maintain order, and insure protection to life and property. These are blessings of liberty which hitherto, under nominal republican governments, have existed in Central America only as theories. The well-known German naturalist and traveler, Dr. Moritz Wagner, has remarked that, in the greater part of Central America, which, since its repudiation from Spain, has been devastated by anarchy and civil wars, people have now arrived at a resting-point which seems to augur a change for a better regulated and happier condition. From the table-land of Mexico to the Isthmus of Panama there prevails a general presentiment among the population that they will be,

probably at no very distant time, compelled, for the benefit of their own country, although to the ruin of the race which has till now governed them, to join the striped banner of the "Union," and to follow, like satellites, in the orbit of the same planet.

The Spanish-Americans look with a sort of painful feeling at this new movement, into which they are hurled by Providential power stronger than human resistance. They have a well-founded presentiment, which fills them with apprehension, that in this forced alliance with the stronger race their own weaker one must succumb, or will, at the best, but poorly vegetate. Nevertheless, every one is convinced that, by transplanting there a more energetic race of men, these countries can not but be greatly improved. Along with the Yankees, capital, banks, commercial and industrial activity, immigration, rail-roads, steam-boats, and plank roads will simultaneously be introduced. But, at the same time, the Spanish-American race, in that blessed tropical region, where Nature bountifully supplies whatever man has need of for his sustenance, will also lose the privilege of indulging in pleasant indolence, without caring for the gigantic progress of neighboring civilization. \* \* \* \* \*

He who has rightly understood the political incapacity of these populations, and the helpless, forlorn condition of all the Spanish-American republics, to which there is but one remedy—a peaceful immigration of Northern men, who, by intermarriage, would gradually change the character of the Southern race—would feel tempted to adopt, in regard to those republics, the awful motto which the poet of the "Divina Comedia" placed over the entrance to hell, "*Voi che v'entrate lasciate agni speranza.*" One should simply advise the Spanish-Americans to submit, with Asiatic resignation, to their destiny. Nature itself seems to have refused to those populations of mixed Indian blood the means of mastering by their own efforts their innate lethargy.

It is a strange force, that destiny which leads nations, partly spontaneously, partly in spite of themselves, on the path marked out for them—the one upward, the others downward. Resistance is of no avail against that destiny.

In such sentiments it is less difficult to acquiesce after a visit, especially if it has been a protracted one, to Central America,

where a constant association with the people, and the opportunity afforded of studying the condition of the country, enables the stranger to estimate the character of its inhabitants. But it is now south as well as west that the American people are spreading; whether this movement is to produce, in the tropics, results at all approximating to those displayed by emigration westward, is beyond the limits of prediction.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

Silver Mining in Honduras.—Mineral Districts and Mines of Tegucigalpa.—Methods of extracting the Metal.—The Gold Region of Olancho and Yoro.—Gold Mining.—Copper and other Metals.—Opals and Precious Stones.

THE SILVER MINES OF TEGUCIGALPA.—It has been justly claimed that Honduras is not excelled by any country in the world in the variety and abundance of her mineral treasures. The testimony of authors through the last half century, not to speak of the accounts of the early Spanish writers, may be cited in proof of the value of the mineral deposits of this portion of Central America. Honduras is eminently a country in which the extraction of metals from the soil is to continue, as it has been, the chief source of wealth to its inhabitants, and to the seductive mining enterprises constantly offering in its broad extent may be traced the real cause of its decay; for the frequent inducements held out in every direction to work silver mines, without the necessary capital and knowledge of the business necessary for success, has, to a certain extent, assisted by the political confusion since the Independence, diverted the people from the steadier pursuits of agriculture.

Under the rule of Spain, silver mines were opened and worked according to the best methods then known; vast sums, as in Mexico and Peru, were realized, but involving the use of large capital. With the departure of the wealthy Spanish families after the Revolution, the mining interest declined, and was but feebly prosecuted thenceforth, except in some rare instances where foreign capital was invested.

But the departure of the prosperous days of silver mining did not discourage those who had witnessed or received traditionary

accounts of their richness from attempting to renew them; and to the present day the country is filled with needy mining adventurers, known as "*empresarios*," but generally lacking the energy and capital to prosecute the business. The mines remaining in the possession of the descendants of the old proprietors are occasionally worked, and in some instances with great profit; but, as a general rule, their productiveness can not be depended upon, unless under the direction of foreigners.

The ores are of numerous descriptions, varying with the locality and formation of the country. Threads of pure silver have often been discovered, but the minerals are mostly carbonates and sulphurets of iron, silver, and zinc, and oxydes of iron, manganese, and antimony. There are occasional chlorides of silver and numerous other substances, presenting the varieties of black, gray, and red ores, the latter resembling extremely solid ferruginous rock, and resisting all attempts of the natives to work them; but most of the ores are easily wrought. The silver region of the Department of Tegucigalpa has been already partially described in my narrative. A more particular account of these mines, and of the native methods of working them, is perhaps necessary to illustrate the subject.

The Department of Tegucigalpa, which is one of seven comprising the State of Honduras, has been divided among miners into ten "*minerales*," or mineral sections, known as the localities of silver, gold, or copper mines. These are reckoned as follows: Barajana, Minas de Plata, San Juan de Cantaranos, Guascaran, Plomo, Villanueva, Santa Lucia, Yuscaran, Cedros, and San Antonio. These I have indicated on my map of Eastern Honduras. There are, in addition, numerous isolated instances of copper and iron mines. Each of these districts has its constellation of silver mines, famous for their ancient productiveness, and which may be described under the head of the various "*minerales*."

LA MINERAL DE BARAJANA.—*La Corona Albarda*, an ancient silver mine, but deserted some years before the Revolution, since which it has not been worked, and could be reopened with little expense. *La Barajana*.—Deserted some years since; was formerly famous for its productiveness. There are numerous evidences in this vicinity of ancient workings, and the re-



mains of old roads, constructed apparently at great expense, may yet be seen, though nearly overgrown with trees.

LA MINERAL DE LAS MINAS DE PLATA.—The names of the mines in this district I was unable to obtain. They were worked up to 1820, when they were allowed to fall to ruins for want of laborers. Some of these mines are known to be rich, and are yet the resort of the straggling “gleaners” elsewhere described.

LA MINERAL DE SAN JUAN DE CANTARANOS.—These mines are situated on high land, and the district has been subdivided into the “*minerales*” of San Juan and San Juanito, the latter situated on the high land, and the former along the valley of the San Juan mountains. The ore yields both silver and gold. Several mines at this place, filled with water and stones, are reputed rich.

LA MINERAL DE LAS MINAS DE ORO.—This district is situated toward the extreme northern point of the department, but is included in that of Comayagua. The ore yields gold and copper, but no silver. Placer washings have also been discovered here, whence its appellation.\* The operations have been confined to the little creek taking its name from the mines, and no attempts have been made to explore the ground beyond or to introduce machinery. The copper mines at this place were once extensively worked; the ore contains a small percentage of gold. The copper formerly coined at the Mint of Tegucigalpa was brought from this locality, giving rise to the supposition that the coin contained a considerable proportion of gold. There are all the facilities here for the labor of a large company.

LA MINERAL DE GUASCARAN.—The names of the mines of this district are not to be found, excepting that of *La Guascaran*, which is still worked by ox power, and yields a handsome return.

LA MINERAL DE PLOMO.—This district is situated to the southward of Tegucigalpa, between that city and Guascaran. Its ores are an argentiferous galena, from which it derives its name. There is a peculiarity in this *mineral* known to no other but that of San Antonio. The veins are said to run like those

\* El muy pequeña con el nombre de Minas de Oro donde existe una Aldea que parte de sus habitantes en ciertas épocas del año se dedican á lavar el oro de sus arroyos en muy pequeña escala, y por un sistema muy atrazado.”—*Golpe de Vista sobre Honduras*.

of some coal mines, in flat, horizontal layers, compressed between the "*majistral*," or formation, or strata, which preserves, in every instance, a similar dip and inclination. A shaft sunk in any part of this district to a distance of fifteen yards, strikes some part of one of these veins, which are large and easily worked. The difficulty of separating the silver from the ore is now alleged to be the only reason why these mines are not worked. Assays are said to have yielded 18.77 per cent., but every attempt at smelting has resulted in loss, owing, as it is believed, to certain unexplained properties in the ore, which resist the usual processes. One of the richest mines here was *La Mina de Plomo*, owned by the Duron family. It had once the reputation of being the most productive in the state.

LA MINERAL DE VILLANUEVA.—Previous to the Revolution this district produced immense sums of silver. Its ores are sulphurets of iron, of a deep red hue, resembling cinnabar. Among its most celebrated mines are that of *La Peña*, owned by Senor Lardizabal of Tegucigalpa, *La Culebre*, and *La Zopilote*, or Buzzard Mine, which, though now filled with stones and water, is asserted to have been yielding in an extraordinary manner at the time of its desertion. A few thousand dollars is represented as being sufficient to restore it to its former condition. There are many mines here with evidences of great antiquity.

LA MINERAL DE SANTA LUCIA.—This district, which I examined more carefully than any of the others, has been elsewhere described at length. Not less than two hundred mines are said to have been worked at this place during the last three centuries. In Tegucigalpa it is regarded as the richest deposit of silver in the state. Only four are now worked. The most celebrated in the annals of the place are those of *La Gatal*, *San Martin*, *La Mina Grande*, *La Mina de los Niños*, *El Cristo*, *La Cangreja*, and *La Mina Encaitada*. The specimens brought by myself from these mines and those of Villanueva were assayed by Dr. Hewston, an eminent chemist of San Francisco, with the results given below.\*

\* San Francisco, California, June 20th, 1855.

"I have carefully assayed eight samples of ore from the silver mines of Honduras collected by Mr. Wells. The following are the results :

LA MINERAL DE YUSCARAN.—No district in the department is so well known to foreigners, or now enjoys so wide a reputation as this. It has been the field of operations of numerous companies, some of whom have amassed large fortunes. The town of Yuscara is its centre. Some twelve mines are now worked or have been opened within ten years. The mines most noted in its history are *Las Guayabillas*, or "*Guavas*," the extraordinary productiveness and history of which I have referred to in my narrative. *Las Iguanas* has, in many respects, a similar history, and, though well known to be rich, is now deserted and in ruins. *El Capero*, situated near the town of Yuscara: it is very ancient, and has been recently opened and successfully worked by Señors Uncal and Ferrari, of Tegucigalpa. *Las Quemasones*, owned by a company of natives, who work it very successfully with rude machinery. *La Malacate* (or Windlass Mine), formerly worked with great profit by a native company. *La Suyatal* (or Palm Plant): the ore of this mine yields a percentage of gold; it is now owned by Señor Funes, of Yuscara, who only works it sufficiently to retain the title under the provisions of the "*Ordinanzas de la Minería*," or Mining Ordinances, which have descended without alteration from the days of the Spaniards. *El Montserrat*, though once yielding largely, is not now worked: it is owned by an English gentleman named Collyer, who is married to a lady of Tegucigalpa. *El*

Samples marked,	Contains pure Silver per Ton.	Value.
1. Veta principal, from Mina de Gatal. Santa Lucia, Tegucigalpa.	40 oz. 17 dwts.	\$52 82
2. Ore from La Mina Cangreja. Mineral de Santa Lucia, Tegucigalpa.	41 " 13 "	53 85
3. Average specimen of red ore from the Mina Peña. Villanueva.	25 " 6½ "	32 75
4. La Mina Encaitada. Santa Lucia.	35 " 19 "	46 48
5. Mina de San Martin. Santa Lucia.	169 " 1 "	218 58
6. La Mina Grande. Santa Lucia.	26 " 19 "	34 85
7. Specimens from upper or northern portion of the vein of La Mina Grande. Santa Lucia (or No. 1).	84 " 2½ "	108 77
8. Veta Azul, Gatal.	13 " 18 "	17 97

The samples of placer gold assayed 910 fine, value \$18 81 per ounce.

Respectfully,  
JOHN HEWSTON, JR.,  
Practical chemist, and late melter and refiner at the U. S. Branch Mint,  
San Francisco.

*Robles*, owned by the Arjenal family, was formerly immensely productive, but is not worked at present. *La Mina de Rivas*, said to be rich, has been abandoned for want of capital. *El Corpus*, an ancient mine, whose incredible riches caused a doubt of the reality of the metal, is believed to have been situated in this district. The ores throughout this locality yield a small percentage of gold.

LA MINERAL DE CEDROS.—This is reputed one of the richest in the department. It is situated two days' journey to the northward of Tegucigalpa. Its ores contain silver without a mixture of any other metal. Among its most noted mines are *La Veta Azul*, owned by the heirs of Señor Gardela, and is the subject of very startling representations; *La Veta Dura*, owned by Mr. Tregoning, of Cedros, is now worked with moderate success.

LA MINERAL DE SAN ANTONIO.—The veins in this district, like those of *El Plomo*, are flat, horizontal layers, running for the most part from north to south, there being secondary and tertiary strata of ore at a distance of twelve or fifteen yards apart. The district is small, but probably offers the best facilities for foreign enterprise. The ores are sulphurets of antimony and lead. As in *El Plomo*, they have hitherto resisted the efforts of the natives to extract the silver profitably, a very large percentage of the metal being lost in the smelting process, against which the limited knowledge of chemistry has been unable to provide. None of the methods now in use, it is believed, can be applied economically to the ore from these mines. The richest of these mines was that of *Mairena*, named after its proprietor, and of whom there yet exist extraordinary legends. He is said to have built from the proceeds of this mine the church at San Antonio, one of the most costly in the state. It is stated that the ores were of such richness, that although, by the rude methods then used for the extraction of the silver, one third was lost, the opulent proprietor was accustomed, on *dias de fiesta*, to throw handfuls of silver pieces among the crowd. *Los Metalones*, a celebrated silver mine, owned by the Xetruc family, is now only sufficiently wrought to retain the legal proprietary right. *La Mina de Confita* has also enjoyed a wide celebrity. This "*mineral*" contains above thirty mines,



and, though less than a quarter smaller in extent than any other in the department, is counted by many to be the most valuable.\*

A description of a "*patio*," or establishment for extracting silver from the ore, will serve to illustrate the crude methods pursued by the natives. It should be borne in mind, however, that the most primitive process is that most generally used. The establishment of Señor Ferrari, at El Chimbo, is regarded as a wonder of ingenuity, and probably the most extensive and complicated in the department, excepting that of Captain Moore.

The "*maquina*," or mill, at El Chimbo, is used for crushing and grinding the ores, as an improvement on the ox-power machines, or still ruder pounding between stones, pursued by the poorer classes. The works are carried by the waters of the River Chiquito, rising in the neighboring mountains of San Juan, and discharging into the River Grande at the bridge of Tegucigalpa. The buildings, four in number, are adobes in good repair; one, forty by sixty, being used as a receptacle or storehouse for the ores, which are brought by mules a distance of five miles, from the mines of Santa Lucia; another, twenty by sixteen, covers the machinery; a third, twenty-four by eighteen, is furnished with a series of ovens, also of adobe, in which the baking or smelting process is performed; the fourth, which has before it an extensive inclosure, in which the amalgamation is conducted, serves as a residence for the overseer and workmen, and has attached to it an office for assaying and retorting, and is supplied with a variety of rude appliances for smelting and other purposes.

The mill consists of a large horizontal water-wheel, carried by a stream let into it by means of a wooden flume or spout. This wheel sets in motion a perpendicular shaft, passing through its centre into a lower apartment, built of rough masonry, the floor

\* Dunlop, in referring to the silver region, of which the city of Tegucigalpa is the centre, says: "All the hills in the neighborhood possess mines of gold and silver, the two metals being most generally mixed together. \* \* \* The natives of Tegucigalpa are among the best class of people in Central America, and as, from the most authentic statements I have been able to collect, its neighborhood would appear to possess natural stores of the precious metals even exceeding those of the celebrated mines of Potosí, in Bolivia, it would appear a very good speculation for a scientific and practical miner, supported with sufficient capital, to attempt their working; perhaps the best adventure now to be found in Central America."

forming a circular stone trough, into which the ore, which has previously been pounded by hand to the size of pebble-stones, is thrown. A certain amount of water, fed from the stream above, is preserved in this circular receptacle, around which, attached by chains to a horizontal bar passing through the shaft, two rocks, weighing half a ton each, are constantly dragged by the power communicated from the wheel: the friction of these rocks gradually reduces the ore to a paste. About two tons can be thus crushed in a day; but, owing to the slow motions of the miners at Gatal and San Martin, only half that amount is worked. There are also several styles of still ruder machines.

As the ore becomes thoroughly pulverized and mixed, it passes through a series of sieves, and discharges by a wooden spout into a large vat, or stone dock of masonry, capable of holding three thousand gallons. When this becomes filled with the liquid paste from the mill, it is allowed to settle, and the water slowly drawn off by stoppers. The ore is then made into heaps or cakes called *montones*, of about one cwt. each, and mixed with salt, as it is said, to facilitate the amalgamation, but probably to detach the sulphur. At certain indications this is placed in troughs, and stamped and kneaded with quicksilver until the amalgamation is supposed to be complete. The whole is then submitted to the baking or retorting process. I was informed by the proprietor that the weight of pure silver thus extracted was found to be exactly that of the quicksilver lost in the operation. This has the local name of "*El Patio*," from the ore being prepared in the large level yard or inclosure thus named.

Another method is that of the barrel, common in Germany, and doubtless the most economical and efficient known. The machinery for this is in good repair at El Chimbo, but total ignorance of the process, and an idea that more quicksilver is thus wasted, has caused it to be disused. It is known as "*Los Barillos*." "*El Fundicion*," or the smelting, is the commonest method. The small pieces of ore, in its native state, are thrown into the heated ovens from an aperture at the top. The silver separates itself from the lead, of which the ore contains a considerable percentage, and forms itself in a mass at the bottom of the oven. This is the most frequently used with those ores containing lead and silver. "*El Quemar*," which is here known as a

distinct process, differs little from the above. The ore is reduced to a state of fusion, and all foreign substances skimmed off with long-handled ladles, an operation demanding great skill, and only performed by the most experienced hands. There is still another method, which is called "*El Baño*," the bath, which not having witnessed, I am unable to describe.

Quicksilver has been principally brought from Europe in German and English vessels to La Union, and, though exempt from duty in most of the states, commands an exorbitant price. Small quantities are now reaching Central America from California. It is not difficult to perceive that very meagre returns should be realized from these crude methods of extracting silver. A very large percentage is wasted or lost by ignorance of the proper modes, while the lethargy of the people prevents the speedier development of the mines. To have acquired and to possess a good estate is the fortune of the Spaniard and of his descendants; not to know how to draw from it a good revenue is his fault and his evil destiny. There is not a department in Honduras that does not contain numbers of rich silver mines, and those that have been legally claimed or "denounced" amount in the aggregate to thousands. The new mine of Coloal, in the Department of Gracias, has yielded treasures almost equaling the early days of the Spaniards, when multitudes of Indian slaves extracted, under the cruelest tortures, the treasures which are now only drowsily sought by their degenerate descendants. Honduras may be truly termed a store-house of silver. Its hills teem with mines, which require but the hand of industry to develop their hidden riches.

THE GOLD PLACERS OF OLANCHO AND YORO.—The extent and availability of the gold-quartz veins and placers of Eastern Honduras I have already considered at length. It is impossible to pass through the state without being constantly reminded of the gold regions of Olancho. The Spanish historians knew of the Guayape as early as 1524. It was among the earliest portions of the interior continent explored by the conquerors. Herrera and Bernal Diaz refer particularly to its golden treasures.\* Juarros notes Olancho as "memorable for the im-

\* "A spacious plain called Ulancho, ill seated near the River Guayape, whence much gold has been taken."—*Herrera*, book iv., c. iv.

mense riches that have been collected from the River Guayape, that flows through it; and even now (he writes in 1809) the finest gold produced in the kingdom is to be found in its sands." He further adds: "Honduras contains more gold and silver mines than all the rest of the kingdom of Guatemala."

Conder refers to the gold of the Guayape in his history of Guatemala; Dunn alludes to Olancho, "famous for the quantity of fine gold which is said to have been collected in the sands of the River Guayape in its course through the valley;" Byam devotes several pages to a description of the placer washings of this part of Central America; Dunlop tells us (page 281) that pieces of gold weighing as much as five or six pounds have occasionally been found; Squier does not hesitate to compare the gold washings of Olancho and Yoro with those of California; later visitors have brought away with them the glittering tokens of its wealth, and preparations are now being made to subject the mines to the test of machinery. The second annual message of President Arce to the Federal Legislature, in 1826, makes mention of an English company who had applied for the privilege of mining on the Guayape. The object of the English settlements at Black River has been traced in Olancho to the vague accounts circulated of the existence of a gold region in the far interior. Pamphlets and newspaper articles have occasionally appeared in Central America on the subject, and native companies have more than once been formed, but without practical experiment, to work the Olancho mines.

Other sources could be quoted to show the antiquity of the gold discoveries in this region. For more than three centuries the Guayape and its tributaries have yielded their annual treasures to the gold-seekers of successive generations; and that the aborigines had long known the uses of gold may be inferred from the ornaments worn by the natives of Honduras when Columbus first visited its shores. It may be supposed that these ornaments were taken with little labor from the surface, as was done in the earlier days of California. The more modern operations have been mainly confined to delving in the sand with sticks by a simple and ignorant Indian population. What may

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"Much gold has been drawn out of the River Guayape, that flows through its territory (Olancho)."—*Herrera*, book vi., c. i.



be contained in the depths below, or would result from a systematic mining organization, is yet conjectural.

I have endeavored to establish the fact that gold mines of real value exist; that they are easily accessible from the United States; that, with proper machinery, in the hands of energetic men, they can be profitably wrought, and that the climate is such as will admit of foreigners laboring in the interior of Olancho. If it is to be believed that Americans will locate where gold is to be had for a reasonable equivalent of work, the natural price of all real success, there seems little doubt of the future importance of Honduras to the world.

But the auriferous deposits of Honduras, though centring in the Guayape district, are not confined to that locality. Early in 1856, companies of Americans started for Olancho from various parts of the United States. Among these was an association sailing from Mobile, known as the "Honduras Colonization Society," whose objects were permanent settlement in the gold region of the Guayape. They landed in May at Truxillo, and proceeded toward the interior.

A merchant of Truxillo, writing from that place, speaks of the arrival of this party and their departure for the interior, and forwards a letter from the secretary of the company dated July 1st. "Three of our party," says the writer, "went up the coast about thirty miles, and returned on the 20th ultimo, bringing some very fine gold, which they washed out themselves from earth taken from the surface, which, they say, yields from five to fifteen cents to the pan, but do not consider it worth our while to locate there, as we had made our calculations for Olancho, where we expect to do better. The natives are getting excited on the subject of gold hunting, and are now flocking to the place of which I have just spoken, known as the Rio Lucinda. I hear that several specimens have been taken out weighing from one to two ounces, but to what extent the precious metal abounds we have not yet been advised."

The river referred to is doubtless the Papaloteca, discharging into the Caribbean Sea opposite the island of Ruatan. A correspondent from Balize, under the date of July 12th of the same year, describes this gold as of a "very fine quality, similar to that found in the southern mines of California, commonly called

shot gold; pieces weighing an ounce and upward have been taken out, and all who work there are doing well. The labor is done in the rudest way, without the aid of art, wit, or science; yet the old women here are averaging one dollar a day, while some of the men are earning from eight to eighteen dollars daily."

Still another correspondent from Truxillo adds his testimony to the discoveries made by the prying ingenuity of foreign explorers. This writer says, "That great metallic enchanter is being found in new places, easy of access and near the coast. About fifteen leagues west of us, in the direction of Omoa, there have been discovered leads of gold, loose and in quartz, in such abundance that several persons, without other materials than hammers and basins, have averaged two ounces a day. The gold is found in a mountain ridge, running parallel to the coast and in view, filling the beds and ledges of several streams which flow to the sea. It must soon be denominated the gold coast of Honduras."

These gold deposits were passed subsequently by Dr. J. C. Tucker, United States Commercial Agent to Honduras, on his return from Comayagua. The Papaloteca, he informs me, is not navigable, having a shallow bar, and the inland navigation being obstructed with rocky barriers. A number of Carib women and negroes were engaged in working the mines, using the rudest materials. Some of them were meeting with surprising good fortune. None who worked made less than four dollars a day, and several had dug from two to four ounces daily. The gold was coarse, exceedingly pure, and doubtless of a similar quality with that assayed for me in San Francisco by Dr. Hewston, which proved 910 fine, equal to \$18.81 per ounce.

From these facts it may be deduced that not only the valley of the Guayape and adjacent rivers contain gold, but the entire eastern and northern slopes of the Cordilleras, and the streams having their source in these mountains, are gold-bearing, and capable of greatly augmenting the golden current which for ten years has been pouring from California into the United States. But, for reasons elsewhere explained, it appears that the same race which has neglected these precious gifts of nature for the more congenial task of self-destruction, will continue to pass heedlessly over them until, under some such policy as was ad-

vocated in 1854 by the far-seeing Barrundia, a more thrifty and industrious people shall lead the way to their development.

One of the most interesting facts connected with the gradual development of the gold mines of California is the inventive genius which has been called into action in the construction of mining machinery. The great majority of these have proved utter failures, owing to their inapplicability to the purposes intended. A collection of them would form a museum of intricate sifters, wheels, and ponderous iron work. Years of experiment have shown that the simplest form of gold mining machinery, based upon scientific principles, is the most economical and enduring. From the common "prospecting" pan through the grades of "rocker" and "long-Tom," the placer miner has at last settled permanently upon the admirable method combining all the advantages of the others, and known as "hydraulic" or "hill mining," a process commenced within four years, and which, with its system of canals interlacing the gold region, employs a majority of the entire mining population of the state. This method could doubtless be introduced with success into Olancho, where the fineness of the gold, ill adapted to the pan or rocker, and resembling that of the South Yuba gold region of California, could be made highly remunerative if worked with American energy.

Though large nuggets have been found in Olancho within a few years, the gold, which is pretty evenly distributed along the river bottoms, is generally extremely fine, except where eddies in the rivers have collected coarser grains in the crevices of the rocks. For this reason I should discourage American miners from depending solely upon the rocker, by which the quantity of earth to be washed being limited, the average returns would probably not equal those of ordinary placers in California. The "hydraulic mining" is the best, and perhaps the only reliable method for Honduras.

The similarity between the topography of Olancho and many parts of California, the remarkable uniformity of the gold deposits throughout the bottoms and river beds, the quality of the gold, the salubrity of the climate, and particularly the abundance of available mountain streams, seem to point out Olancho as peculiarly adapted to the successful operation of hydraulic

mining. Whether the returns would at all equal those realized from the mines of California the future must decide. From my own observation, and the facts I was able to obtain from others, there appears no reason why a systematic mining, pursued on the plans above referred to, should not yield remunerative returns.

Spanish-America contains many "*El Dorados*" awaiting the advent of adventurous miners. Olancho is no isolated instance. Bolivia boasts its Matto Grosso, Peru its Napo, Guatemala its Polochic River, and New Granada its Antioquia, but in none of these are such facilities presented for foreign enterprise as in Honduras. Gardiner's and other crushers could be advantageously used in many of the auriferous quartz veins in Olancho and Segovia, where the *arrastre* or *trapiche*, the rudest of mining machinery, is now used with limited success.

While at Tegucigalpa I was presented with a little book, written by Señor Jacobo Bernadis, of Truxillo, entitled "*Golpe de Vista sobre Honduras: considerado en sus relaciones Fisicas y Geograficas, seguido de un comunicado, sobre la riqueza de Olancho y Yoro.*" In relation to these two departments, the author says: "The rivers Guayape and Jalan, passing through numerous placers, carry with them an abundant golden treasure. These two rivers unite in the vicinity of Jutecalpa, the capital of Olancho, and, following a tortuous course, receiving several tributary streams, discharge on the north coast of Honduras, where the river assumes the name of Patook or Patuka. The bar of the Patook has from three to five feet of water in the summer, and from nine to eleven in the winter. From this point up to its confluence with the Wampu it has from four to five, and thence passing certain rapids, denominated '*chiflones*,' owing to the rocks skirting their banks, there are found from four to four and a half feet up to its junction with the Guayambre. Leaving this to the left, it may be navigated with three and a half and four feet as far as the confluence of the Guayape and Jalan, without the slightest risk or obstacle, to within one league of Jutecalpa. Following the course of the Guayape, it may be navigated with a depth of three and three and a half feet to the point or place known as Aleman. Thence up to its headwaters are found gold placers, known there as *pintas*, as distin-



guished from 'vetas,' or veins, which are found at all points with very little trouble. But the greater part of these placers have remained unexplored, as they require a more industrious and intelligent population to develop them, as well as to organize formal enterprises, such as Hondureños by themselves are incapable of doing.

"Leaving Jutecalpa in a north and northeast direction, and crossing the department toward Yocon, in a territory equal to thirty leagues of longitude by ten of latitude, there is not a rivulet, however insignificant, that does not contain gold in its bed or banks. Most of these, guided by the formation of the sierras, discharge into the Guayape and Jalan; and others, including the Silaca and Mangulile, into the Mirajoco, which thence, taking the name of Yaguale, and fertilizing part of the valley of Olanchito, empties into the picturesque Roman or Aguan, which falls into the Caribbean Sea sixteen miles east of Truxillo. The larger rivers receive their deposits of gold from the sudden freshets in the mountain tributaries, fed by the cañons and streamlets above. The gold of the rivers Guayape, Jalan, Mangulile, Sulaco, Caimito, Pacaya, and Yaguale, is well known, and that of the two first and two last mentioned may be considered of the very finest quality (*clase coronario*)."

The above extract is an evidence that the people of Honduras are aware of the treasures concealed in their soil, though incapable of turning them to practical account. This ceases to excite surprise when we remember that the same race inhabiting California many years previous to the American conquest remained in apathetic ignorance of the gold deposits of their country.

COPPER, IRON, ANTIMONY, CINNABAR. — The baser metals abound in various parts of Honduras. Copper is found in large and inexhaustible veins, and often in a state of extreme purity. The hill of El Chimbo, near Tegucigalpa, has been already described. Copper is found quite to the northern coast of Yoro, whence some very rich specimens of ore have been recently sent me, taken, as I was informed, from the vicinity of Truxillo. These are similar to the specimens sent from Cuba to the United States for smelting. The ores seen by Byam are described as almost always combined with sulphur, or any oth-

er combination that requires calcining to be got rid of. "They might well be smelted in a common blast furnace, with the aid of equal quantities of iron-stone, which lies in large quantities on the surface of all the hilly country. This is the common method used in Chili for this species of copper ore. The copper produced is remarkably pure and malleable; it is called "*cobre de labradores*," or workmen's copper. It never requires turning when made into pots and pans for all sorts of cooking. The copper ores are what the Spanish miners call "*metal de color*," metal being the term they use for ore, and are mostly red and blue oxydes and green carbonates, with now and then the brown and pigeon-breasted. They cut easily and smoothly with the knife, and yield from twenty-five to sixty per cent."

Very valuable and extensive mines of iron exist in the Department of Tegucigalpa. The ore is so pure and abundant that it is said to exhibit in one place, where the bed, outcropping, is crossed by a mule-path, a surface of bright iron. The attempts that have been made to work these mines are so insignificant as scarcely to merit notice. Antimony, tin, and zinc mines are also found, but have never yet been worked. The same may be said of cinnabar, mines of which are known in the Departments of Comayagua and Gracias, some of which are said to have been secretly worked by foreigners with great success. Señor Cacho, Minister of Hacienda, informed me by letter of the existence of valuable cinnabar mines, in working which he was anxious to engage foreign labor.

PRECIOUS STONES.—Gems and precious stones are among the treasures offered by Honduras to the industry of the world. Of these I can only speak of the opal, of which latterly some rare specimens have been brought from the Department of Gracias. The error should here be corrected as to the quality of these stones. In most instances they have been pronounced, upon close examination, to be the "hard," or noble opal, and in that respect entirely different from the "soft," or Mexican opal, also known as the "Panama stone."

A distinguished lapidary informs me that the soft opal may be detected by immersion in warm water causing the colors to disappear for several hours, when they will again return. Several from Honduras have been submitted to this test, without loss

of color or brilliancy. Nearly a hundred were obtained by Mr. A. Marié, of New York, in Gracias, some years since. Some of these were extremely beautiful, and of extraordinary size. He describes the method pursued by the Indians in extracting the opals as rude and careless, the common pick and a heavy hammer alone being used. They occur in calcareous and limestone beds, and in small gangs and nests of the volcanic porphyry formation. It is stated by Mr. Squier that some of the largest and most beautiful stones have suffered at the hands of the Indians, who estimate their value rather from their numbers than their size, and consequently break them in small pieces.\*

In the rough, the stone has a dull whitish appearance, and only reveals its concealed lustre under the hands of the lapidary: their value is scarcely yet appreciated in Honduras. In Tegucigalpa I saw a large opal set in silver, worn by a native, which, though not highly prized by its owner, must have been worth not far from \$1000.

On making inquiries in the town for opals, I was told that an old lady of Tegucigalpa had a collection, which she had owned for several years, and was willing to dispose of. She readily parted with the lot—about twenty—for five silver dollars, and, supposing them to be of little value, except as adding to my collection, they were forgotten until my return to California, when a German lapidary pronounced them precious opals, some of them of considerable value. The largest has since been valued by competent judges at \$500, and the smaller ones were scarcely less beautiful. The incident is mentioned as showing the slight value which is often set upon opals in Honduras. They are confined to the single Department of Gracias, on the Guatemalan frontier: some emit blue and red scintillations; others blend their colors with purple and yellow, and others exhibit a mixture of green and yellow, with fiery flashes.

It should be remembered that no scientific exploration of the opal region of Honduras has ever been made. In 1829, Thompson, in his report, designated precious stones as among the most valuable exports of the Department of Gracias.† Mr. Squier states that amethysts are reported to have been found in Gra-

\* *Notes on Central America*, p. 168.

† Mawe, in his *Treatise on Diamonds*, describes the varieties of the precious

cias. That asbestos exists in Olancho there is every reason to believe.

Coal is found in the western part of the state, and on the Pacific coast within a short distance of the Bay of Fonseca. The mines occur principally in the Departments of Comayagua and Choluteca. The specimens shown me in Nacaome were of an inferior, if not worthless quality, but were probably not fair samples of the mine whence they were taken.

Pearls are said to have been found in the Bay of Fonseca, but no specimens came to my notice while I was in Central America. As their presence is dependent upon the existence of oysters, there is no reason why that bay should not produce them, shell-fish being found in exhaustless quantities there. Northward, in the Gulf of California and in that of Nicoya, in Costa Rica, the pearl-fishery has been prosecuted with success. Fonseca Bay is equally a great inlet from the sea, and would doubtless equally well reward the efforts of the pearl-fisher.

opal, of which class those of Gracias are now believed to be, as "white or pearly gray. When held between the eye and the light, it is pale red or wine-yellow, with a milky translucency. By reflected light it exhibits, as its position is varied, elegant and most beautiful iridescent colors, particularly emerald green, golden yellow, flame and fire red, violet, purple, and celestial blue, so beautifully blended and so fascinating as to captivate the admirer. When the color is arranged in small spangles it takes the name of the harlequin opal. Sometimes it exhibits only one of the above colors, and of these the most esteemed are the vivid emerald green and the orange yellow. When the stone possesses the latter of these colors it is called the golden opal. \* \* \* \* \* The precious opal is generally small, rarely so large as an almond or a hazel-nut, though I have seen some specimens the size of a walnut, for which several hundred pounds were demanded."



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Climate of the Interior.—Of the Coasts.—Diseases.—Public Instruction.—Amusements.—Religion.—Aboriginal Remains.—Ancient and present Population.—Government.—Political Divisions.

ALTHOUGH the sea-coasts of Central America have become proverbial for their insalubrity, it may be fairly claimed for the uplands of the interior, from Costa Rica to the plateaus of Mexico, that no portion of the world offers a more genial or equable temperature. Nature, as if unsatisfied with her lavish gifts in other respects, has dispensed to inland Honduras a climate not excelled by the most delightful regions of California. For the greater part of the year the mercury ranges between 69° and 85° Fahrenheit, the changes of the seasons so gradually ordered that the transitions from winter to summer, consisting in an alternation of dry and showery weather, is scarcely perceptible, and attended with few or none of the effects noticeable in the temperate zones.

The four seasons are thus simplified into two, the rainy and dry. The former, announced by unfrequent gusts of rain and heavy clouds, commences about the first of May, and continues until the middle of November. It should not be understood, however, by the term "rainy season," a constant fall of rain, the change of season in this respect being somewhat similar to that of California. The wet months of Central America are in reality the pleasantest, not only from the verdant aspect of nature, whose wooded and floral beauties are developed by the rains, but from the peculiarly bracing atmosphere experienced in the mountain districts at that time.

Throughout the greater part of the Central American isthmus the dry season is an uninterrupted drought, only relieved by slight showers at long intervals. Olancho and the interior of Eastern Honduras is, however, an exception to this rule. The season there commences, as usual, in November, but for geographical reasons and the topography of the country, rain falls

at intervals until the middle of March. One of the heaviest thunder-storms I saw in Central America occurred on the 13th of February, 1855. The rains come up with a southerly and easterly wind, and generally fall in the afternoon, though in the wet months proper the mountain storms sometimes rage with great violence all night.

The "*chubasco*," or afternoon squall, may be depended on during the rainy season. The double-headed clouds heralding its approach are unmistakable, whether in the interior, marshaling with lowering front along the rugged peaks of the Cordilleras, or on the coast, rolling up from seaward, glimmering with lightning, and muttering distant thunder. In the winter these storms burst upon the traveler unannounced, and in an incredibly short time swell the mountain streams into impassable torrents, as quickly subsiding with the passing of the tempest. These are succeeded by intervals of warm sunshine, imparting a freshness to the landscape, which, in its smooth, undulating character and sober woodlands, often recalls the finest portions of New England scenery, with the soft but invigorating climate of Jalapa, Puebla, or the city of Mexico.

There is scarcely any season on the Caribbean coast when the climate is uncomfortably cool except during the violent norths, when the mercury has been known to descend to 60° Fahrenheit; but in the mountains, the weather is often so cold, from December to February inclusive, that fires are necessary for comfort; hail-storms, one of which I have elsewhere alluded to, are recorded, and in Salto, Santa Lucia, Cerro de Ule, Nueva Arcadia, and particularly in the elevated districts of Gracias, the cold is such that many of the inhabitants descend to the valleys until the return of more genial weather. In Tegucigalpa, at an elevation considerably over three thousand feet above the sea, the thermometer ranges from 56° to 70° in the morning, from 72° to 80° at noon, and from 70° to 78° in the evening, from November to March inclusive. This shows an evenness of temperature leaving little to be desired. At Jute-calpa, during the winter months, I found the climate to differ but slightly from that of Tegucigalpa, notwithstanding its lesser altitude.

A thermometrical table, kept during my journey, shows the

range of the mercury from the summer of 1854 to the spring of 1855. It exhibits a difference of temperature between the coasts and the uplands of the interior as marked as that existing between the temperate and torrid zones. During the period passed in the interior of the country, the lowest mark of the thermometer was  $52^{\circ}$ , and the highest  $88^{\circ}$  of Fahrenheit. The results of this table would be here given in full but that the constant change of position and elevation while in the table-lands prevented a consecutive number of observations sufficient to establish a basis of temperature.\* I may add, however, that in the

\* The following are extracts from a meteorological table kept during my first visit in Tegucigalpa :

Date.	Sunrise.	Noon.	Sunset.	Observations.
1854.				
Oct. 18	64	75	70	The winds during the latter part of October were principally from the N.N.E. and E. Heavy afternoon and evening storms, with thunder and lightning. Interludes of clear, bracing weather and light winds. Black, dense clouds descending below the peaks of the surrounding ranges during the rains, and light, feathery clouds in the intervals. The air cool and still from 5 until 9 A.M.
19	65	76	72	
20	64	76	72	
21	66	76	72	
22	64	75	73	
23	65	75	73	
24	66	75	72	
25	66	76	73	
26	67	75	72	
27	66	76	72	
28	66	76	72	
29	65	75	72	
30	65	76	73	
31	65	76	72	
Nov. 1	65	77	73	<div> <div>Clear dry norther.</div> <div>Rain and heavy clouds at night.</div> </div>
2	64	78	73	
3	65	76	72	
4	63	75	71	
5	63	74	72	
6	64	74	73	
7	64	76	72	
8	63	75	72	

The following figures are from observations taken during my first visit in Jutecalpa, 1100 feet elevation:

Date.	Sunrise.	Noon.	Sunset.	Observations.
1855.				
Jan. 3	62	70	69	Unfrequent but violent showers, with thunder and lightning.
4	61	72	70	
5	62	73	68	
6	60	72	69	
7	61	75	69	
8	62	72	70	
9	63	73	70	
10	62	73	69	Winds N.E. and N. Much rain, and low, dense clouds, with slight intervals of clear weather.
11	63	74	69	
12	63	73	69	
13	61	73	68	
14	61	73	69	

northers, which in the winter months often sweep with great fury over the country, the temperature is such as to require thick clothing throughout the day; and where fires are kept burning in the corridors they are surrounded with a huddling, shivering group. The mornings and nights are particularly cool. In conclusion, it is not too much to accord to the interior of all Central America a climate not surpassed on the American continent.

The temperature of the coast offers little inducement for a lengthy sojourn to the stranger. On the Pacific side, the heats of summer are tempered with a grateful breeze setting in from seaward about 11 A.M. and subsiding at sundown; the evenings and nights being rather oppressive, and the mornings still and hot. The town of Amapala, in the Bay of Fonseca, is one of the most temperate; but, retiring a few leagues inland from the coast, we encounter an entirely different climate, where the natural heat of the low lands is unrelieved by the sea-breeze, from which they are partially deprived by intervening or adjacent ranges: here the heat is often extreme, and, to strangers, unbearable. Fevers and other diseases incident to the country are more prevalent, and even the natives absent themselves, if possible, during the hot months. Such are some of the towns situated between the sea-coast and the Cordilleras; among these could be cited Nacaome, Choluteca, Pespire, and towns similarly located in Nicaragua and San Salvador.

On the opposite or Atlantic side of the continent, the climate

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The following are from observations taken during my second visit to the Hacienda of Lepaguare, 2100 feet elevation:

Date.	Sunrise.	Noon.	Sunset.	Observations.
1855.	°	°	°	
Jan. 16	58	72	70	} N. and N.E. winds—very light and fitful; dense fogs often overlaying the valleys and crowning the hill-tops. Mornings cool and damp; at noon, the wind stronger.
17	59	72	70	
18	58	72	70	
19	58	72	69	
20	58	73	70	
21	59	73	69	
22	58	72	69	
23	59	73	71	
24	58	74	70	Rain toward sunset and at night.
25	58	74	72	
26	59	74	72	

On Cerro de Ule, at an elevation of 5000 feet, the thermometer showed at 7 P.M., on the 18th of March, 1855, 52° Fahrenheit: this was during a strong, clear norther.



is better known to Americans. The atmosphere, charged with moisture from the regular trade-winds sweeping across the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea, preserves a constant humidity, while the condensing of these vapors upon the slopes of the Cordilleras, forms the numerous streams interlacing this side of the continent, and of which the Pacific slope is thus partially deprived. The luxuriance of forest and jungle of the Caribbean coast, so remarkably contrasted with the lesser density of the woodland of the southern side, may be traced to this unceasing fertilizing agency.

As a consequence of the general moisture of this region, together with its high temperature, the climate can never be considered salubrious, a conclusion sufficiently established by the unsuccessful attempts of the Spaniards to maintain populous towns there, and the melancholy failure of the English, Prussians, and Belgians to colonize the coast between Cape Gracias á Dios and Guatemala. Of these scarcely a trace but the graves of many of the adventurers remains to point out the folly of such enterprises. The harbors of the eastern coast should serve but as portals to the healthy region of the interior. The experience of many years demonstrates this, and the sallow faces of most North Americans or Europeans who have escaped the ordeal of acclimation, too plainly indicate the enervating effects of a protracted residence. A description of the climates, and the physical causes influencing them, of Vera Cruz, Tampico, San Juan del Norte, Aspinwall, and Balize, will apply, with slight exceptions, to the settlements on the northern coast of Honduras.

The reports of recent visitors of this coast present more favorable accounts of its climate. Captain Henderson, in 1811, represents the norths as being unpleasantly cold; the *wet* ones conveying an imperfect idea of a November day in England, and the *dry* ones, or those not accompanied by rain, as beautiful, agreeable, and invigorating. These, he says, occur between the months of October and March. The same author, speaking of Balize, says: "The strong sea-breeze, which blows freely nine months of the year, contributes mainly to the health of the inhabitants. Still, the heat is by far too great to make any part

of the province desirable as a place of emigration.”\* The same author alludes to the attempt of the speculator M<sup>c</sup>Gregor, many years since, to establish a colony at the mouth of the Black River, or Rio Tinto, a subject latterly made the basis of a well-known work of fiction. This enterprise was the means of sacrificing many lives. The remnants of the colony afterward reached Truxillo, whence some members visited the interior for mining purposes. The few remaining of the ill-fated Belgian colony at Santa Tomas, in Guatemala, also retired into the salubrious uplands, and became soon restored to health.†

\* In relation to the norths (or northers) of the Caribbean coast of Central America, the following occurs in Captain Livingston's Translation of the Spanish Directory for the West Indies (Derrotero de las Antillas):

“Upon the Mosquito shore, Honduras, and eastern coast of Yucatan, the general winds or breezes prevail in February, March, April, and May; but during the first two of these months they are occasionally interrupted by *norths*. In June, July, and August, the winds here are from the eastward and westward of south, with tornadoes and calms. In September, October, November, December, and January, they are from the northward or southward of west, with frequent gales from W.S.W., W.N.W., and N.

“The first of the norths is regularly felt in the month of September, but in this month and the following one, October, the norths do not blow with much force. Sometimes it happens that they do not appear; but, in that case, the breeze is interrupted by heavy rains and tornadoes. In November the norths are established, blow with much strength, and continue a length of time during December, January, and February. In these months, after they begin, they increase fast; and in four hours, or a little more, attain their utmost strength, with which they continue blowing for forty-eight hours; but afterward, though they do not cease for some days, they are moderate. In these months the norths are obscure and northwesterly, and they come on so frequently that there is, in general, not more than four or six days between them. In March and April they are neither so frequent nor last so long, and are clearer, but yet they are more fierce for the first twenty-four hours, and have less northwesting. In the interval before November, in which, as we have said, the *norths* are established, the weather is beautiful, and the general breeze blows with great regularity by day, the land-breeze as regularly by night.”

† The climate during part of the rainy season on the coast of Honduras is shown by the subjoined table, kept at Truxillo by an American resident in 1856:

Date.	Sunrise.	Noon.	Sunset.	Observations.
May 8	78°	88°	86°	
9	78	89	86	
10	78	88	86	Fair weather.
11	76	88	87	do.
12	79	89	86	Cool breezes in the evening.
13	79	89	84	Cloudy and cool in the evening, with some wind.
14	76	86	82	Fair weather.
15	74	87	85	do.
16	76	87	85	do.

Of the amount of rain falling either in the interior or on the coast, no statistics are known but those appearing in the elabo-

Date.	Sunrise.	Noon.	Sunset.	Observations.
May 17	76°	88°	84°	Fair weather.
18	80	88	84	Shower in A.M.—cloudy all day.
19	78	84	80	Fair.
20	80	88	84	Fair.
21	79	88	84	{ Several explosions of gases in the mount- ains in the P.M.
22	76	87	84	{ Slight shower this evening—showery dur- ing the night.
23	75	87	84	{ Rain after 8 P.M., accompanied with thun- der and lightning.
24	79	86	84	Shower this evening.
25	76	86	84	Rained all day.
26	76	78	79	Cloudy, with a breeze.
27	76	80	80	do. do.
28	74	84	81	Shower at 7½ P.M.
29	76	84	82	Shower at 9 P.M.
30	74	84	83	Shower at 5 P.M.
31	76	84	80	Showery during day and evening.
June 1	75	82	77	Showery during the afternoon.
2	75	80	78	Do. do., with cool breeze.
3	75	80	78	Cloudy, with a breeze.
4	78	86	82	Fair.
5	78	88	84	Fair.
6	78	88	83	Rain from 8 to 10 A.M.
7	78	86	80	Showery all day.
8	78	86	80	Showery since 2 P.M.
9	76	81	78	Do. since 5 P.M., with wind.
10	72	84	78	Thunder during the P.M.
11	76	84	82	Rain about 3 P.M.
12	75	84	82	Fair, with light wind.
13	75	85	82	Showery during A.M.
14	78	88	84	Cloudy—thunder—rain at 8 P.M.
15	76	84	81	Rain during P.M.
16	75	83	79	Cloudy during A.M.
17	76	81	81	Rained violently this P.M.
18	76	83	77	Cloudy; slight sprinkles of rain.
19	76	80	71	Showery all day.
20	76	79	79	Cloudy, with wind in the P.M.
21	76	81	79	Rainy since 2 P.M.
22	76	82	77	Rainy since 2 P.M.
23	74	82	75	Rainy during P.M.
24	74	81	80	Rainy during P.M.
25	74	84	81	Fair.
26	76	84	80	Showery during P.M.
27	76	75	76	Showery during the day.
28	74	82	78	{ Showery during P.M., with wind and thun- der.
29	73	84	80	Fair.
30	76	86	80	Showery at 5 P.M.
July 1	74	84	80	Showery during the day.
2	—	—	—	Rain at 5 P.M.
3	—	—	—	Fair.
4	—	—	—	Fair.

In "*Martin's British Colonies*," p. 138, appears the following summary of a meteorological table kept several years since at Balize, Honduras. It may be

rate report published in 1852 by O. W. Childs, Surveyor of the proposed Nicaragua Ship Canal. The admeasurements of this engineer give the following results; and, as similar natural causes act upon the whole of Central America, they will apply as well to the adjacent republic of Honduras. From September 9th, 1850, to September 25th, 1851, the amount of water falling at Rivas, taken in inches and decimals, was as follows:

September (1850 .....	7.005	April .....	0.430
October .....	17.860	May.....	9.145
November .....	1.395	June.....	14.210
December .....	3.210	July.....	22.640
January (1851) .....	0.380	August.....	11.810
February.....	0.000	September.....	13.240
March.....	1.410	Total inches .....	101.735

The amount of rain that fell during the year from September 9, 1850, to September 9, 1851, was 97.71 inches. There were 226 dry days, and 139 in which rain fell. From May to October inclusive, 90.89 inches fell, and during the remaining six months of the year, known as the dry season, only 6.82 inches. The observations were taken in Rivas, where rain falls in nearly every month. That rain falls in Olancho in nearly every month of the year is shown by the meteorological tables extending nearly through what is known in Central America as the "dry season."

DISEASES.—The diseases are in reality few. Fevers are rare except on the coast, where the calentura or coast fever prevails received as a fair criterion of the temperature on the entire coast of Honduras, Guatemala, and Yucatan:

#### METEOROLOGICAL REGISTER AT BALIZE, HONDURAS.

Months.	Thermometer.			Winds.	Remarks.
	Max.	Med.	Min.		
January ...	77°	75°	72°	W., N., and N.W.	{ Generally dry, fine weather; some rain.
February..	78	78	75	W., E., and N.E.	{ Ditto, with pleasant breezes and showers.
March .....	79	78	74	E.N.E. and W.	Ditto, ditto.
April .....	82	80	78	E. and N.E.	Ditto, sea breeze regular.
May.....	83	81	79	E.N.E. and W.	{ At times dry, then heavy showers, lightning, and thunder.
June .....	84	82	80	E.N.E. and S.E.	Air moist, cloudy—heavy rain.
July.....	83	82	80	E.N.E. and S.E.	Ditto, thunder and lightning.
August....	83	82	79	E.N.E. and W.	Ditto, ditto.
September	83	82	79	E., W., and N.E.	Fine occasionally.
October ...	83	81	78	E.N.E. and W.	Fine, with some heavy showers.
November	80	79	74	E.N.E. and W.	Dry and pleasant.
December	78	75	71	E.N.E. and W.	Ditto, ditto; slight showers.



during the hottest months. Goître is not confined to any particular locality, but is most common in the mountainous districts, where, as in Switzerland, the poorer classes are subject to it. I met with but three or four instances of it.

Elephantiasis, though not common, is occasionally found also in the upland regions. But one leg is ever stricken with the disease; the limb gradually increases to double the size of the other, the swelling often reaching above the thigh: this disease is considered incurable and fatal. The natives have various explanations of these and similar affections, the commonly received one being that of drinking impure water. Such disorders, and the remarkable swelling of the muscles of the neck, leaving a sort of hump behind, may be accounted for in a similar manner with the same complaints in Europe, with the exception of goître, which can not, as in the mountains of Switzerland, be attributed to snow.

The foreigner is often afflicted with a painful cutaneous eruption resembling boils, and here called "*granos*;" they attack the leg below the knee, and sometimes swell the feet to such a degree as to render it impossible to wear boots or shoes. This affliction may be cured by drinking the Coyol wine, before referred to, and by baths of salt and water.

The fevers of the country are the "*tertiana*" (or every-other-day fever), resembling in its effects and mode of attack the worst form of fever and ague of the Western United States, and the "*calentura*," a type of the same. This is uncommon in the interior, and yields easily to the usual remedies, which are generally strong cathartics, followed by doses of quinine, prescribed by the native physicians on the general and rather perilous principle that if a little is good, a great deal is better.

The symptoms of Central American fever are cold shudderings, varied by quick flushes of heat, and sickness at the stomach. If the patient has taken cold, they are reckoned dangerous. An intolerable headache, weakness of the limbs, aching of the joints, dizziness, and general debility, attend the attack. It is hastened by immoderate use of liquors and fruit, irregularity in eating, or imprudent exposure to the rains, night air, or noon-day sun. But the most scrupulous care will not always avail,

and the mere change of climate renders the foreigner liable to it. The fevers, as a general rule, succumb to experienced and prompt medical treatment.

The cholera, though decimating the largest cities of Central America in 1836, has never yet made its appearance in Olancho, and but few cases have ever occurred in any part of Honduras; the northeast trades seem to act as a constant disinfectant from this and all other epidemics.

As in Chinandega, Nicaragua, some of the women of Olancho are disfigured by a large swelling, or wen, protruding from the fore part of the neck, directly under the chin. It presents an unseemly sight, and has never been satisfactorily accounted for. It has been mistaken by strangers for the goître, and may be identical with the "*güegüecho*," or swelling of the glands of the neck, mentioned by Dunn in his work on Guatemala.

The native physicians are generally graduates of the college of Guatemala. Their knowledge of medicine is extremely limited; probably the same remedies used by the followers of Gil Gonzales and Pedrarias are in vogue at the present time. Female doctors, or old women known as "*curadoras*," are found in every town, whose art is confined to a few simples, and, in fevers, to rubbing the patient with tallow, and mumbling over some senseless incantation. These old creatures are usually extremely jealous of foreign interference in this business.

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.—The revolutions and their attendant sectional jealousies have greatly retarded the progress of popular education in nearly all Central America. A feeble spark has been kept alive, however, and there are now, as estimated by Mr. Squier, in Honduras about four hundred schools where children are taught to read and write. The young of all classes meet here on a common level, and, with a different system and efficient teachers, the result would be highly encouraging. The scholars are generally apt and intelligent, and capable of receiving instruction. Honduras has produced more than her quota of the distinguished men of Central America; among them soldiers, statesmen, and orators, who, in a wider field and under more propitious circumstances, might have filled an illustrious page in history.

The *Academia Literaria* of Tegucigalpa, and a similar in-

stitution in a less flourishing condition in Comayagua, are the only colleges or universities in the republic. The former I have elsewhere described.

The principal seat of learning in Central America is at the city of Guatemala, where are several old literary institutions founded under the viceroyalty. Youths are sent there from all parts of Honduras. The University, though greatly improved in all respects within the last ten years, is still not equal to those of Mexico. Dunn, writing in 1828, represents them in a ludicrous light, and rebukes the national vanity of the historian Juarros, who speaks of examinations in surgery, of a royal cabinet of natural history, a school of mathematics, and a college of physicians. "In connection with the university," he adds, "there are twelve professorships, and an academical senate of fifty doctors. It is needless to enumerate the chairs: they are of Latin, philosophy, theology, morals, etc. What the precise method of imparting instruction may be matters little. It is sufficient to know that the students leave the college with similar acquirements to those Gil Blas possessed when he departed from the University of Salamanca." Guatemala has lately had no revolutions, and more attention has been devoted to the culture of the useful arts and to education than formerly. Additional appropriations have been made, and that some interest is felt in scientific subjects may be gathered from the interesting mineral, ornithological, and botanical collection forwarded in 1855 to the Great Exhibition in Paris.

By far the majority of the people of Honduras are steeped in ignorance and superstition. The libraries, consisting principally of theological works, are few and meagre, and mostly the property of priests. But one newspaper, "*La Gaceta Oficial*," is published in the republic. The books are generally Mexican and Guatemalan republications of Spanish works, or political and personal pamphlets and handbills. Years of experience forbid all hope for a change for the better, except, perhaps, through foreign influence, with its attendant enlightenment. While the only available means of instruction remain in the power of the priesthood, and until the progress of events shall have led to such a political change as has been above hinted, there can be little done for the cause of popular education in Honduras.

AMUSEMENTS.—In a country so secluded from the world, and consequently so thrown upon its own resources, the means of public diversion in Honduras are limited. They consist of bull-fights, which are rude and humble imitations of similar exhibitions in Spain; gambling, confined to monte, the national game of the Spaniard and his colonial descendant; horse-racing, cock-fighting, in which all classes indulge, from the clergy to the meanest *mestizo*; dancing, and the public *funcions* and *fiestas* of the Catholic Church.

Thompson speaks of theatricals at Guatemala; but, with the exception of a diminutive Thespian temple at the capital of Costa Rica, this species of amusement has not reached the other states. A circus from California once attempted to seduce the Salvadorens, but unsuccessfully. With the true Spanish dislike of innovations, there is little encouragement extended to the efforts of foreigners to win the Central Americans from their old channels of diversion.

RELIGION.—The present Constitution of Honduras (that of 1848) recognizes only the Roman Catholic religion, but no obstacles are advanced to untrammelled worship, under whatever denomination. The largest liberty now prevails in this respect; still, I was informed by the curate of Jutecalpa, who had represented the Department of Olancho in the National Legislature, that the erection of any but a Catholic church would be opposed by the government and the priesthood. In an attempt, made some years ago by an English company, to introduce colonists into Honduras for agricultural purposes, Mr. Chatfield endeavored to secure for them from the government the privilege of erecting and worshipping in a Protestant church, but was sturdily opposed. Whatever innovation, political or social, may be in store for Honduras, it is not probable that any change can for many years be effected in the religion of the country. The forms of the Church are not oppressive, the inhabitants generally venerating the padres.

Under the viceroyalty there were convents in Honduras of the Franciscan, Merced, and Carmelite orders. These, however, have been many years abolished, and two of them turned into universities. The benefices and clerical exactions under the Spanish rule were abolished by Morazan with the exodus of



the friars in 1829. Of the former property and revenues of the Church, little or nothing now remains; the padres are generally poor, and the churches have been long since divested of their valuables. Unlike Mexico, the revolutions have resulted in the impoverishing and curtailing the power of the Church. Señor Lerdo de Tajeda, now at the head of the Mexican financial department, estimates the real property of the clergy in that country at the incredible sum of \$250,000,000! In Central America, on the contrary, the churches are falling to decay; the religious processions, bombas, and tinsel for feast-days are dependent upon the contributions of the devout.

The baneful results of clerical interference in the political affairs of Central America have taught the people to define, as far as possible, the limits between the Church and state. Hence the gradual relief of the political system from the control of the priests, and a liberal tolerance of all Christian forms of worship.

POPULATION, ABORIGINAL AND MODERN.—Recent explorations in Western Honduras have shown that a people not greatly inferior to the builders of Palenque and Chichen in civilization and intelligence, resided here at the date of the discovery. In Chapter XXIV. I have referred briefly to the aborigines of Honduras as described by Herrera. The names of many towns in the valley of Comayagua, passing through the department of that name, are perpetuated from their aboriginal ones, existing, it is presumed, at the time of the Conquest. The ruins of Tenampua, situated about twenty miles southeast from Comayagua, are noticed at considerable length by Mr. Squier, from whose description it would appear that extensive structures for defensive or religious purposes, or both, existed here at a remote period. It was doubtless in this vicinity that the Cacique Lempira, with thirty thousand warriors, fortified himself in 1536, and for six months defied the Spaniards under Alonzo de Carceres. The state, however, is generally bare of aboriginal monuments, though the ruins of Copan, until lately erroneously located in Guatemala, are many miles within the boundaries of Honduras, and but a few days' travel from the original landing-place of the Spanish discoverers.

The aborigines of Eastern Honduras and Segovia, as described by Juarros, though known under the general name of

Xicaques, Moscos, and Sambos, were composed of many nations, among whom were the Lencas, Teguacas, Payas (or Poyas), Albatuinas, Tahuas (or Toacas), Jaras, Taos, Gaulas, Fantasmas, Iziles, Motucas, and many others, all speaking different languages, having distinct governments, manners, and customs, and distinguished by a variety of hues, black, white, and copper-colored. These tribal designations, however, were assumed after the conquest of Honduras, the variety of colors having arisen from the mixing of the natives with a considerable number of shipwrecked Spaniards, and afterward with negroes cast ashore from a wrecked slave-vessel. The names of Taguzgalpa (Teguaca village?), Jutecalpa, Tonjagua, Teupacente, Lepaguare, Jutequili, Culmí, Asagualpa, Catacamas, are all derived from the Indian language, or are the aboriginal names unchanged since the discovery. That the Spaniards found this portion of the country well populated, is evident from the opposition shown to their march into the interior, and their designation as "powerful tribes" by Bernal Diaz. Their descendants, under the name of "*tribas errantes*" and "*salvajes indigenos*," as distinguished from the more civilized and agricultural tribes, located nearer the towns of the Spaniards, still wander over the coast savannas, or tread the mountain solitudes, rarely communicating with the settlements of the "converted" Indians.

No traces appear of architectural design, or even the existence of an organized system of worship, such as is evidenced in the gigantic idols and splendid ruins found in Yucatan, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. Mounds containing specimens of ancient pottery are often met with by the *vaqueros* while exploring the gloomy depths of the forest, but these seldom survive the destructive curiosity of the natives. In the valleys of Agalta and Abajo, in Olancho, and in the Department of Tegucigalpa, especially on the extensive hacienda of Labranza, the mounds are most frequently met with. The terra-cottas contained in them are of an ancient shape, of which no patterns now exist; from ten to thirty pieces are found in each, generally in the form of pans and jars. I could not learn that any idols or human bones had ever been discovered. The jars have often been found so complete as to be adopted for household use; they exhibit no signs of painting or ornamental sculpture.

The proportion of white, Indian, and mixed races in Honduras is not correctly ascertained, nor are there known any statistics upon which to base other than a conjectural statement. The estimates of Crowe, Thompson, and Squier, the only reliable authors on these subjects, make their statements for Central America generally, or for Guatemala; but in Honduras it can not fail to strike the visitor that the negro and Indian stocks form a very large proportion. Assuming Mr. Squier's estimate of the population (350,000) to be correct, the relative proportions may be stated as follows:

Negroes and Mulattoes.....	140,000
Indians.....	100,000
Ladinos.....	60,000
Whites.....	50,000
Total.....	350,000

No reliable census has ever been taken of the state. The population even of large towns is not ascertained with certainty, the statements of intelligent residents varying two thousand for Tegucigalpa, and an equal number for the smaller town of Jutecalpa. The variations in population produced by the revolutions sufficiently account for this, all the male inhabitants deserting a small town to escape conscription on the approach of war, so that successive travelers may give entirely different estimates. At the commencement of the war of 1855 between Honduras and Guatemala, I was informed that steps had already been taken to form a census of the state; but, under the usual system of government, no correct estimate can ever be made, as, at the approach of a military or civil official, the poorer classes flee precipitately from the villages.

While the white population has diminished, the blacks, Indians, and *Ladinos* have been slowly but steadily increasing, and the Carib settlements between Cape Cameron and Omoa have augmented to a surprising extent in the last four years. Indiscriminate amalgamation has nearly obliterated the former distinction of castes, and few families of pure Spanish descent are known. Some of the wealthiest merchants of the Department of Tegucigalpa are blacks, possessing a surprising degree of business tact. Two of the largest commercial houses have negro proprietors, whose mercantile relations extend to Europe,

whence they import most of their goods. Though the great majority of the negroes of Honduras are a thoroughly debased and ignorant class, there are numerous exceptions. The Senate and House of Assembly have contained many highly intelligent blacks and mulattoes, thoroughly educated in the Central American school of politics, and with sufficient discernment to foresee the decline of their own influence and the power of the negro race with the introduction of the Teutonic stock. Hence their violent opposition to foreign enterprises in the national councils and in their private circles.

The clergy are mostly negroes or *mestizos*. Their power for evil has been largely curtailed since the Independence; but, with few exceptions, these men exercise rather a favorable influence over the people, and are generally respected. The whites, standing in a small numerical minority, regard the increase of the other races with alarm. They have been the originators of nearly every scheme for the invitation of foreigners into Honduras, and, except when restrained by popular opposition, have entered heartily into the proposals of Americans to colonize the country, or in any way to develop its resources. The failure of such enterprises has, in most cases, been owing to the overthrow of such Liberal administrations, and the succession of the Servile or *mestizo* party.

The wealthiest and most pure-blooded of these families are located in the eastern part of the state, where a species of republican aristocracy is maintained, and from whom, in the course of time, the regeneration of Honduras, by their affiliation with foreigners, will doubtless proceed.

The Indians, descended from the aboriginal tribes already alluded to, are distributed throughout the state, but divided into two distinct classes: those inhabiting the plateaus and tablelands of the interior, who may be classed as a peaceable, industrious people, such as the Texiguats and others, cultivating small patches of vegetables and fruits, which they carry patiently to the nearest towns; the other, the coast Indians and those wandering over the wilds of Olancho, such as the Poyas, Woolwas, Guacos, and the Caribs, who are located from Cape Gracias á Dios to Guatemala. These are principally employed as servants, mahogany cutters, carriers, and muleteers. The



best authorities represent them as docile and light-hearted, and the few who have intelligence enough to interest themselves in the political issues of the country generally express their preference for the Liberal party.

The condition of the coast Indians and negroes has somewhat improved within five years. An attempt at thrift in the construction of their huts, an improvement in their style of dress, and other advantages accruing from a desultory trade with Truxillo and Omoa, are apparent. Many of them reside in those parts as servants or workmen.\*

Physically, the Indians are superior to the whites in Honduras. They are mostly robust and athletic, of fine stature, and capable of great exertion. As laborers, they are better calculated for the climate than any other people, excepting the negroes. The couriers pass over incredible distances in a day; the marches recorded of Morazan's troops, and which the dates of battles and historical occurrences fully substantiate, are almost unparalleled. These Indians subsist for long periods on roots, vegetables, and wild fruits, and resist disease with the scantiest imaginable clothing. As *arieros*, silver miners (*tanateros*), and mahogany cutters, they display a power of endurance for which,

\* It is stated on the authority of an American gentleman, for several years a resident at Omoa, that descendants of the ancient Aztec race are yet to be found at that place. The few who are known have been employed as domestics by the foreign residents, and they are represented to be of diminutive stature, and unlike any other Indians in Honduras. A small tribe of them are said to exist on the confines of Guatemala, whence the few found in Honduras have come. One of their peculiarities is to retire to some secluded spot when stricken with disease, where, it is said, they often die for want of assistance, which they stubbornly refuse. An Aztec who had lived for some years in the house of the United States Consul, Mr. Follen, became sick, and refused all proffers of aid; he retired from sight, convinced that his time had arrived, and moodily desired that none should follow him. His remains were subsequently found in a deserted hut, where he had hidden himself to die. Similar instances are related of this singular people. It may not be irrelevant here to remark that the living curiosities exhibited some years since under the name of the "Aztec Children" were taken from an Indian village near Cojutepeque, in San Salvador, by a Spaniard named Silva, to whom the mother sold them for a trifling sum. The story of their Mexican origin was an amusing fiction—a part of the speculation. The most remarkable fact in relation to this subject is, that the mother has since produced a counterpart of the first couple, and, at the time of my visit to Central America, was desirous of disposing of them to some speculator from *el Norte* for a reasonable consideration!

in a tropical and at times debilitating climate, the stranger is quite unprepared.

Such a population, wisely but rather arbitrarily ruled, and with the impetus of foreign enterprise to stimulate them to exertion, are capable of raising Honduras to an enviable grade of prosperity, but not without the ingrafting of a Teutonic stock by liberal encouragement to immigrants, thus to prevent the fatal decrease of the white races, and to open the way to civilization and progress. Priest-ridden, steeped in superstition, and enervated by prejudiced and ignorant rulers, the people have nothing to hope for the future where the past has been but the history of destructive and barbaric tendencies.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICAL DIVISIONS.—The republic is divided politically into seven departments or counties, as follows: Olancho, Yoro, Tegucigalpa, Choluteca, Comayagua, Gracias, and Santa Barbara. The capital of each corresponds to the name of the department, excepting Olancho, of which the capital is Jutecalpa. The city of Comayagua, though smaller and less populous than Tegucigalpa, is the seat of government of the republic.

The government is based on the Constitution of 1848, framed under the administration of President Lindo, whose signature, and that of Santos Guardiola, is subscribed to it. The President holds office for four years, and is ineligible for re-election. The actual cabinet consists of two ministers—of Treasury and of State, and the Legislature of two bodies—the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. Each department is entitled to one senator and two deputies, making in the aggregate, from seven departments, twenty-one members of the General Assembly. The judicial power is vested in a Supreme Court, held at Comayagua and Tegucigalpa. These are the outlines of the governmental system; but so numerous and incessant are the political changes, that they may be said to exist rather as formal declarations than facts. It is seldom that a quorum of the General Assembly can be collected, and on extraordinary occasions military force is used to compel the attendance of members hostile to the existing administration.

The revolutions, however, do not so often affect the departmental authorities. These consist of a *Jefe Politico*, or govern-

ment agent, a military commander (*"Commandante Militar"* or *"de Armas"*), a Judge of First Instance, and an *"Intendente de Hacienda,"* or collector of the public revenues. The departments are subdivided into *Municipalidades*, governed by a *Jefe del Distrito* and an *Alcalde*, who in the larger towns has two or more deputies. These local authorities are tacitly continued undisturbed by changes in constitutions or administrations.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

Commerce.—Exports and Imports.—Commercial Regulations.—Revenue.—  
Seals.—Public Debt.

AN attempt to obtain accurate information respecting the amount of exports and imports in Eastern Honduras is met by a total lack of statistics, leaving the inquirer in the dark, and rendering the task at best a doubtful one. The accounts registered at the *Aduanas* of Truxillo and Omoa have been allowed to disappear through neglect, or have been lost or destroyed amid the oft-recurring revolutions of the country, in which a quick rotation of officials has made the registering of entries a matter of little moment compared with the pecuniary interests of these temporary place-holders.

In the absence of all reliable facts in Honduras touching these subjects, we naturally turn to the U. S. Custom House of Boston, through which port the greater part, if not all, of the Honduras trade with the North has been conducted in the hands of two well-known firms, who for many years have carried on a profitable trade with the settlements of Balize, Omoa, and Truxillo. The English trade seems also to be controlled by several London houses, having extensive agencies at Balize. Their operations, however, are mainly confined to the cutting and exporting of mahogany.

The frequency of the changes in the political organization of Central America has rendered it nearly impossible for the United States government to keep pace with them, and, since the ratification of the treaty of 1826 between the republic of Central America and the United States, our government has continued its commercial relations with that country on the basis of the

stipulations therein contained, disregarding the new political attitudes assumed at short intervals during the last thirty years, and as yet having no cause to regret this rather loose, if not careless basis of commercial intercourse.

The statistics of commerce during the last quarter of a century have been consolidated in the U. S. Custom House accounts under the general head of Central America (including Balize or British Honduras), and this arrangement has been observed through eight administrations, though in that time the Central American confederacy has been dissolved, each state subsequently proclaiming itself an independent republic, with full powers to "declare war and make treaties."

Thus generalized, no accounts have been taken of the commerce of any one state, and it was found impossible (without a tedious examination of papers and documents difficult of access) to obtain the statistics of trade of Honduras.

The house of Messrs. Nickerson & Co., engrossing the commerce between Boston and Northern Honduras, have kindly furnished a list of the amount and description of goods received by them from the ports of Omoa and Truxillo during the four annual voyages of 1855 and a portion of 1856, in exchange for the cheap manufactured and other goods adapted to the wants of a people of simple habits. But, though the interior has been for some years known to them as a rich and fertile country, abounding in resources, they have naturally avoided extending their business relations beyond the better-known articles of commerce, elsewhere enumerated, and which command certain prices in the markets of the United States. Very rich specimens of copper and silver ore, besides opals of considerable value, have been brought thence by the masters of vessels in their employ, but, for reasons above enumerated, they have declined going beyond the limits of their "legitimate trade."

The results of the four voyages above referred to, and extending through 1855, are as follows :

#### FIRST VOYAGE IN 1855-6.

*From Truxillo.*—2445 hides, 20 bales deer-skins (238 doz.), 104 bales sarsaparilla (130 lbs. per bale), 2878 arrobas Lima wood, 2359 feet of mahogany, 72 lbs. turtle-shell.



*From Omoa.*—26 bales sarsaparilla, 98 dozen deer-skins, 23 bales of indigo (2749 lbs.), 2785 hides, 50 ounces of old silver.

#### SECOND VOYAGE.

*From Truxillo.*—3226 hides, 319 dozen deer-skins, 58 bales sarsaparilla, 1584 arrobas Lima wood, 137 lbs. turtle-shell, 375 lbs. India-rubber.

*From Omoa.*—9 bales sarsaparilla, 217 dozen deer-skins, 2400 hides.

#### THIRD VOYAGE.

*From Truxillo.*—660 hides, 122 bales sarsaparilla, 147 dozen deer-skins, 3608 arrobas Lima wood, 50 lbs. turtle-shell, 42 lbs. India-rubber, 5 ounces of gold dust, 79 marcs of silver.

*From Omoa.*—40 bales sarsaparilla, 337 dozen deer-skins, 2412 hides, 477 horns.

#### FOURTH VOYAGE.

*From Truxillo.*—3302 hides, 169 dozen deer-skins, 109 bales sarsaparilla, 598 arrobas Lima wood, 19 lbs. turtle-shell.

*From Omoa.*—1984 hides, 111 dozen deer-skins, 48 bales sarsaparilla, 6 lbs. turtle-shell, 15 ceroons of indigo.

The above hides are brought from the interior of Olancho and Yoro on mules, and sometimes from a distance requiring many days' tedious travel to accomplish. They are valued at about twenty per cent. less than those of Buenos Ayres in Boston.

Of the exports from the coast of Northern and Eastern Honduras, Mr. Nickerson estimates that of hides about an equal quantity are carried to Havana and Boston. Of deer-skins, the markets of Balize and Boston at present consume about the entire product in equal quantities. Those reaching Balize are exported to England and New York. Gold and silver is sent almost exclusively to England. Boston, Balize, and Havana divide between them the exports of sarsaparilla from Truxillo and Omoa. Of all other exports, more is probably taken to Havana and Balize than Boston.

It should be remembered, however, that full one half of the

entire produce of Honduras in the above articles finds its way, as I have elsewhere explained, to San Miguel. Taking this fact into consideration, and remembering the amount passing through Balize and to Havana, it will appear that the trade of the northern coast is not inconsiderable, and may, with a moderate degree of energy, be largely increased.

But in the article of mahogany and other valuable woods, a vast commerce may be established with the United States, enough to enrich many extensive houses. Great fortunes have been realized in London in this business, which, carried on exclusively by the English, is still the basis of large operations. The revenue of Honduras is considerably increased by the duty imposed on cutting mahogany. These duties, however, are partly avoided by corrupting the government officers, so that only a small portion of them are realized by the state. I have elsewhere referred to the manner of cutting, and the method of dragging and rafting the logs down the rivers to the sea.

From the Pacific side, as I have before remarked, the exportations of mahogany and produce to California have not yet assumed an important position in commerce. A company of Americans have lately proposed to set up a saw-mill in San Salvador, near the port of Acajutla.

The exportation of silver ore has also been latterly commenced. The first sample of ores taken from a mine near Choluteca was received in August, 1855, consigned to me by Señor Dardano, of Tigre Island. This consisted of twenty-five ce-roons of lead and iron sulphurets, blended with disintegrated quartz and limestone. The total amount was a little over a ton. This was assayed by the German firm of Wass, Molitor, & Co., of San Francisco; but, owing to the lack of competent apparatus, only a small sample was smelted. The result was sufficiently favorable to warrant the proprietors of the establishment in promising me to incur the expense of erecting costly European machinery capable of smelting large quantities, could an amount of ore per year be guaranteed sufficient to keep the apparatus employed. Of this ore enough can be obtained to load several vessels a year. This, as well as the greater part of that sent to San Miguel, is shipped in English vessels from La Union and Acajutla to England, where the purchasers, who

have exchanged cheap manufactured goods for the more precious commodity, realize large fortunes in the business. I am convinced that a valuable trade is yet destined to grow up between California and Central America, not only in silver and copper ores, but in vanilla, dye-woods, mahogany, the great tropical staples, and a variety of precious medicinal plants and gums, all of which may be monopolized by the merchants of San Francisco.

The cargo of the schooner Julius Pringle, from Realejo and Amapala to California in 1855, consisted in part of "122 planks of mahogany, 4 inches thick, and from 12 to 15 inches wide; 178 planks of cedar, or bay mahogany, from 14 to 22 inches wide, and 4 thick, and from 10 to 24 feet long; 363 planks ditto, from 14 to 18 inches wide, and 2 thick; 30 planks ditto, from 27 to 36 inches wide, and 2 thick; 80 boards, from 27 to 36 inches wide, and 1 inch thick; 1233 boards ditto, 14 to 22 inches wide, and 1 thick." I give these dimensions and numbers to show the kind of timber produced by the mills of Amapala and Chichigalpa. This small cargo exhausted the entire stock on hand at both mills.

A considerable quantity of lumber goes from both places to Peru and Bolivia.

The commercial intercourse between Honduras and the United States is based upon the treaty ratified in Washington in July, 1826, between Don Antonio José Cañas, minister plenipotentiary of the Central American Republic and the United States. This convention was celebrated during the administration of President Manuel Jose Arce, in the second year after the fall of Iturbide.

On the dissolution of the Union in 1838, the different states tacitly adopted this treaty without important alterations. The ports of Amapala and La Brea in the Gulf of Fonseca, and those of Truxillo and Omoa in the Caribbean Sea, have since been made ports of entry, in addition to those of La Union and Omoa, specified as *entrepôts* in the last treaty. The port of Concordia, near Acajutla, on the Pacific coast of San Salvador, was also thrown open to commerce in 1853. All ports recognized (*habilitados*) by the laws are open to vessels of every nation at peace with the republic, and manifesting no opposition to its independence.

The law protects all merchandise through these ports, provided that the regulations of the tariff are complied with, and that the duties which it imposes are paid. The articles specified as duty free are books printed or in manuscript, bound or stitched; instruments adapted to science; music, printed or in manuscript; instruments and implements of agriculture, mines, arts, and trades; the seeds of plants not cultivated in the republic; gold and silver, whether in bullion or coin. The merchant importing coin and merchandise in the same vessel is allowed a deduction of two per cent. upon an amount of merchandise equal to the amount of coin.

All produce of every nation at peace with the republic is admitted into ports of entry. The exportation of live cochineal and of *semilla de wiquilite* (or indigo seed) is alone prohibited by the treaty of 1826. The restriction probably does not now apply to Honduras, as the cochineal is not extensively cultivated beyond Guatemala and San Salvador. All the produce of the soil, excepting mahogany and dye-woods, and all manufactures of the republic, are free of export duty, as is also all foreign produce and merchandise, provided they have paid the duty on importation; but if the goods have not been reimported from some other port of the republic, they will pay full import duties. Amapala was constituted a free port in 1846, the privilege to endure for ten years from that date. The now expired term will doubtless be renewed at an ensuing session of the Legislature.

Honduras has lately evinced an anxiety to cultivate mercantile relations with Europe, and particularly with the United States. The object of the mission of Señor Barrundia in 1854 was to throw open the resources of the state to the enterprise of the American people. His address is elsewhere referred to, and, but for the sudden death of its author, would doubtless have led to important results. The administration of Cabañas, so eminently progressive and liberal in its tendency, has, unfortunately, been overthrown by foreign influence, and a reactionary policy substituted, which seems destined to reproduce the ancient system of exclusion and anarchy.

In 1853, Central American exports to France, as shown by the *Boletín Oficial* of Costa Rica, were valued at 1,252,565



francs, and the value of imports from the same country at 86,902 francs. In 1854, the exports to the same were 982,871 francs, and the imports 1,166,741 francs. The disparity, however, is not so great in the trade with Great Britain.

Cattle, bullion, sarsaparilla, lumber, hides, deer-skins, silver ore, drugs, gold dust, India-rubber, cabinet and dye woods, rice, vanilla, turtle-shell, balsams, coffee, cochineal, indigo, cotton, cacao, fruit, sugar, and tobacco—all in irregular and often extremely limited quantities, may be enumerated as the articles of export from both coasts of Central America, but the ten first mentioned comprise all carried from the sea-ports of Honduras. In addition to these might be added, if supported by a reasonable amount of commercial enterprise, the valuable articles of horns, hoofs, tallow, bees'-wax, honey, horses and mules (from Olancho), salt beef (from the same department), as recommended by Mr. Bayley in the printed guide accompanying his map, and even cattle, could be shipped to American ports on the Gulf of Mexico. Large quantities of native cheese are also sent by mule-trains from Olancho (the principal place of its production) to the other departments and to San Salvador. The cheese of the valleys of Agalta and Uloa is reckoned the best produced in Central America, and is so counted by Juarros and Bayley. It is coarse, salt, and hard, though much esteemed.

In exchange for the above-named exports are received at Omoa and Truxillo, from England, Jamaica, Havana, Balize, and the United States, sperm candles, soap, shoes, boots, hardware, rigging, cottons, clothing, cheap manufactured goods, agricultural implements, and household ware.

In the works of Dunlop, Henderson, Dunn, Thompson, and others, may be found brief statistics of the trade of Central America, but so limited and old as to be of little present value. Correct figures, however, are with difficulty obtained, as the *Diarios* and *Gacetas* in which such accounts are published are proverbially inaccurate. A series of articles, the results of personal observation, recently published by one of the editors of the *Panama Star and Herald*, "Costa Rica," by the German naturalist and traveler, Dr. Moritz Wagner, and the works of Mr. E. G. Squier, are the most reliable.

While at Tigre Island I made the acquaintance of an intelli-

gent American gentleman, who for ten years had been engaged in mercantile pursuits in San Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. At my request, he kindly committed to paper the results of his experience, which are here inserted, as throwing some light upon the commercial affairs of the country. In relation to the trade of the five states, he states that it is only within the last eight years that commerce has been extensively conducted from the Pacific side; previous to that time the great dépôt was in Balize and Jamaica, whence most of the merchandise was received.

The credit extended to the merchants from these two places was very great, but, with the settlement of California, the course of trade became gradually changed, and direct importations are made from the factors in Europe, although the merchants of England have lately curtailed the credit system, and advanced the rates of freights from \$20 to \$25 and \$30 per ton, owing, probably, to the high rates of freight to Australia.

The commerce of the United States with Central America would have been much enhanced had we succeeded in making good and sound commercial treaties, the staple articles of consumption of all the states being brown sheetings, brown drills (called, in Spanish, *Mantalisa* and Manta drills), which in the United States are manufactured much better than in England, where less cotton can be spared in their fabrication. For half a century, the English, French, and Italians have enjoyed a monopoly of the lucrative trade with the Central American states. From England are received shirtings, sheetings, prints, and all cheap manufactured articles (most of which are made to order, to suit the trade), cutlery, ale, cloths, cassimeres, and earthen and wooden ware. The manufactured goods are usually of the most ordinary kind. From Italy are imported olives, sweet oil, vermicelli, sardines, maccaroni, green cheese, sausages, silk goods, and many minor articles, which in the aggregate form a large importation. From France come *vin ordinaire*, cognac, silks, prints, calico dress-patterns, cheese, mustard, gloves, shoes, cassimeres, liquors, &c. From California are imported quicksilver (duty free), powder, agricultural implements, machinery, flour, potatoes, preserved meats, pickles, wine, spirits, furniture, jewelry, clothing, fire-arms, boats, oils, &c.

Rice, hides, indigo, tobacco, silver ore, and pure silver (*plata bruta*) in bars, constitute the chief exports of San Salvador. The production of indigo varies annually as to quantity, owing to causes over which the producer has no control; but, from statistics, it can be set down, for the last seven years, at an average of about 60,000 ceroons (of 150 lbs. net) per annum, at a cost to the purchaser placed in La Union or Sonsonate (the two principal ports) of about \$90 the ceroon, including all charges, and ready to ship to a foreign market. The classification of all indigo in this state is by numbers, No. 9, or "*Flores*," being the maximum, and No. 1 the minimum—the lowest quality or dregs. Indigo forms a medium of exchange for imported goods, about two thirds going direct to England, and the remainder to Guayaquil, Valparaiso, and Germany. The merchants of San Miguel generally advance to the producers about one half the value of the crop. In the European markets, Central American indigo ranks in value next to that of Bengal. The indigo crop of Guatemala amounts to about 4000 bales annually, and from 12,000 to 15,000 bales (of 100 lbs.) of cochineal. From 8000 to 10,000 quintals of tobacco is annually shipped to Lima and Valparaiso from La Union and Sonsonate. Of the entire crop no reliable estimate can be made, though the article is a government monopoly, as great quantities are raised clandestinely for private use.

REVENUE AND MONOPOLIES.—The same deplorable lack of data debars the arrival at any reliable estimate of the revenue of Honduras. With every political change, the amounts have been altered to suit the views of the temporary rulers. Among the *estancas*, or government monopolies which are let out to the highest bidders, are the manufacture and sale of tobacco, aguardiente, and the right to open "*patios de gallos*," or cockpits, during funciones; there are also duties on the exporting of cattle, mules, and horses, and such commercial imposts as are recited elsewhere in this chapter. Another source of revenue to the Spanish colonial government, as it is still to the republican states, was the issuing of sealed or stamped paper, known as "*papel sellado*." Transfers of property, grants, mortgages, and contracts could only be legally made on this paper, which is sold at the office of the *Intendente de Hacienda* of each department at the following standard prices:

Sello Primero, 1st class .....	\$16	Sello Segundo .....	\$3
“ “ 2d “ .....	12	“ Tercero .....	4 reales
“ “ 3d “ .....	8	“ Cuarto, 1st class .....	1 real
“ “ 4th “ .....	4	“ “ 2d “ ....	1 medio

The dollar referred to is of copper, rating from 15 to 17 to the “*duro*,” or silver dollar. Sometimes, however, these are received as low as 12 and as high as 25 to the dollar, as the abundance or scarcity of copper money at the time may dictate. These stamps or seals were renewed every two years under the viceroyalty, as they now are annually; but at present simply the date is given, with no attempt at ornament. In times of public peril, or when the government demands funds for military purposes, the rates are increased at the decree of the executive or Legislature. The national finances are also augmented at such times by contributions levied upon the wealthiest citizens, though not to the ruinous extent practiced in Nicaragua.

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## CHAPTER XXX.

Coins and Currency.—Weights and Measures.—The Department of Olanchó.—The Guayape or Patook River.—Timber Trees.—Cabinet and Dye Woods.—Staple Productions.—Wild and cultivated Fruits.—Drugs, Balsams, and medicinal Plants.

COINS AND CURRENCY.—During the viceroyalty, the limited commerce of Central America was conducted on the basis of a provincial currency and the coins of the Spanish realm. The first are rarely met with, and I saw but two during my stay in the country. After the Independence, the first republican money was coined in 1822 at Guatemala, and all subsequent issues of the various states, up to the disunion in 1838, appear to have been made under the republic. From that period each state adopted its own republican currency, but retaining, with few exceptions, the emblem or device of the confederation—five volcanic peaks surmounted by a rising sun. There was also the rude provincial coin known as *macaco*, or cut money, which appears to have been chipped from thin sheets of native silver, without regard to size or form, and afterward reduced to standard weights. A great quantity of this is still in circulation. Mexican, Spanish, and all South American doubloons are valued at \$16, and



# GOLD AND SILVER COINS OF CENTRAL AMERICA.

## GOLD.



DOUBLOON, \$15.50.



HALF DOUBLOON, \$7.75.



PISTOLE, \$3.50.



HALF PISTOLE, \$1.75.



QUARTER PISTOLE, 90 cts.

## SILVER.



EIGHT REALS, \$1.00.



TWO REALS, 24 cts.

SILVER.



TWO REALS, 24 cts.



TWO REALS, 24 cts.



TWO REALS, 24 cts.



REAL, 12 cts.



REAL, 12 cts.



REAL, 12 cts.

HALF REAL, 6 cts.

the silver coins of both continents circulate without question as to their relative worth, though all have their commercial value at the custom-houses.

But the principal money of Honduras is a debased copper coin from the mint of Tegucigalpa, the first issue of which was made under the state government immediately after the disruption of the republic. Originally this contained a proportion of silver, and was readily received by the people as a circulating medium, under the name of "*Moneda provisional del Estado de Honduras*," stamped around its circumference. But, as the necessities of the successive governments became more urgent, the issues were vitiated, until at present they are but pure copper. These, as I have before remarked, though originally passed at the rate of sixteen to a silver dollar, with the name of "*pesos de cobre*" (copper dollars), have now depreciated to half that nominal value, and in some parts of the state they are absolutely refused. Twenty or thirty pounds weight of this coin is often passed from hand to hand in local trade. It follows that the traveler should provide himself with enough silver change to meet all his wants when passing from the coast toward the large towns of the interior.

Foreign speculators, in later years, have bought up all of the original issues for the silver contained in them, and during the administrations of Lindo and Cabañas plans were proposed for the withdrawal of the whole debased money and the issue of a new currency. The poverty of the state and the troublous condition of political affairs have prevented this laudable design. The whole was to have been recalled by a German company, who were prepared to pay the state a reasonable percentage for the privilege.\* The course of the bullion exported from Central America is shown, by the few data in existence, to have been to Spain, England, and Germany. The amount produced

\* The public debt of Honduras is due principally to British bondholders. It is stated by Señor Carlos Gutierrez, formerly Under Secretary of the Treasury, to be \$350,000. A portion of this is the debt of the viceroyalty and the old republic, which was afterward assumed pro rata by the states, no part of the interest of which, as relates to Honduras, has ever been paid. The same authority estimates the revenues of the state at \$300,000, and the annual export of silver bullion at \$500,000. Some small indemnifications for damages sustained during the wars were paid to native claimants in 1855, by pledging the customs, but such adjustments are extremely rare.

can not be estimated, owing to the entire absence of statistics, upon which to base any approach to a reliable statement. In Chapter XXV. I have imbodyed some brief facts upon this subject, but these are quite unsatisfactory, and scarcely merit the space allotted to them. It would appear, however, that \$6,004,214, as the amount of gold and silver coined at one mint in thirty years, might be believed, when contrasted with the recently-published enormous statements of the coinage of Mexico, where the gold and silver mines were of a similar description, and worked in the same manner as those of Central America. A document published at Mexico in 1855 states that there was struck at the mint of Mexico, in 1690, coin of the value of five million piastres; from 1700 to 1800, during a century, the quantity augmented each year, and at last reached twenty-five millions of piastres. This was, however, the culminating point of the annual fabrication. In 1810 it was reduced to seventeen millions; in 1817 it had declined to only half a million; then rose, in 1838, to a million and a half; in 1850, to two millions; in 1852, to two millions and a half; and in 1854, to nearly four millions, or one million less than in 1690.

That vast sums must have been taken from the mines, we may infer from the numbers of Indian laborers who, in the viceroyalty of Guatemala, were obliged to work as slaves in the mines of all the states. Juarros, quoting Fuentes, states that in the valley of Sensenti, in Honduras, an *alcalde mayor* was appointed to receive the king's fifths of the products of incredibly rich gold mines, in which slaves were employed, and that this officer had the power of compelling one fourth of the Indians within a circuit of twelve leagues to labor in them. It is also stated by Rev. G. W. Bridges, who has written upon the history of Jamaica and the adjacent main land, that "a million Indians perished in the service of the conquerors in working the mines of Honduras."\* It is thus evident that, during the period above referred to in Mexico, a sum not much inferior must have been extracted from the mines of the kingdom of Guatemala. The neglect shown by the Spaniards in matters of record and statistics is most forcibly illustrated by Humboldt's estimate

\* Annals of Jamaica, vol. ii., p. 129.



of the gold and silver product of Guatemala (Central America), against which he sets "none."

Comparatively a small portion of the gold and silver taken from the mines was coined in the country, if we may judge by the limited amount of colonial money now in circulation. Much more than would be supposed from the primitive habits of the people has been worked into jewelry, for the mounting of saddles and other ornamental purposes. Considerable quantities of Guayape gold are also annually exchanged for foreign manufactured goods at the fair of San Miguel.

American gold is received without hesitation in the principal towns, but is regarded with suspicion in the villages and along the road, there being a general distrust of its purity. English and all European gold and silver is more current. Spanish, Mexican, and South American ounces (doubloons) are better known, but it is difficult to exchange any large gold coin except in the capitals and local commercial centres of departments.

A pamphlet printed by the *Academia Literaria* at Tegucigalpa in 1853, entitled "*Conocimientos Utiles*," contains the following, in relation to the relative value of coins in Honduras :

The ounce (onza) contains 4 doblones (not doubloons), and is valued at \$16.			
" doblon	"	2 escudos (crowns),	" " 4.
" escudo (de á real)	.....		2.
" escudo (de á medio)	.....		1.
" peso (dollar of silver) contains 2 tostones or 8 reales.			
" toston contains 2 pesetas or 4 reales.			
" peseta	"	2 reales or 4 medios.	
" real	"	2 medios or 4 cuartillos.	
" cuartillo	"	2 octavos.	

In the payment of commercial duties, the dollar and its fractions is received as in the United States. The franc is valued and received at 19 cents, or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  real, and a quarter of an octavo, 5 francs being thus valued at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  reales and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  octavos. The pound sterling (*libra esterlina*) is valued at 37 reales, the shilling (English) at  $1\frac{7}{8}$  real.

An ounce of pure silver is divided into 12 *dineros*, and this into 24 *granos*. An ounce of coined silver (*plata acuñada*) should contain 10 dineros and 20 grains of pure silver, and 28 grains of copper. This is the "*lei de la moneda*."

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.—These are founded on the Span-

ish system, as is the case in most Spanish-American countries. The commercial weight is—

The quintal contains	4 arrobas	=100 pounds.
“ arroba	“	25 pounds (libras).
“ libra	“	16 ounces (onzas)=(1 lb. 4 drs. avoirdupois).
“ onza	“	16 adarmes (8 drachms).
“ adarme	“	16 grains (granos).
The libra also contains	2 marcs (marcos).	
“ marco	“	8 onzas.
“ onza	“	4 quartas.
“ quarta	“	4 artienzos.
“ artienzo	“	39 granos (grains).

There are also distinct weights for gold, as follows :

1 libra contains	2 marcos.
1 marco	“ 8 onzas.
1 onza	“ 6 castellanos and 2 tomines.
1 tomin	“ 12 granos.

Thus an ounce of gold is divided into 50 tomines or 600 granos. The Troy weight is invariably used in weighing silver. The “caballeria,” as understood in Central America, is  $645,816\frac{1}{8}$  square yards; its length is  $1136\frac{1}{2}$  varas, and its width  $568\frac{1}{2}$  varas. The term is said to have originated with the early settlers, who, in default of scientific surveyors, designated as “caballerias” sections of land that could be encompassed by a swift horse in a given time. In long measure the league is divided into 3 miles or 4 quartos, or 6666 varas and 2 tercias, and the mile into 2222 varas and 6 dedos. A manzana is 400 varas of circumference. The vara, or yard (of cloth measure), is divided into medias, tercias, cuartas, sesmas, ocharas, pulgadas, and dedos; it has 4 palmos, or 33.384 inches; the palmo has 9 pulgadas, or  $8\frac{1}{3}$  inches; the pulgada, or inch, has 12 limas; 4 dedos are equal to 3 pulgadas; the pie, or foot, has 11.128 inches;  $2\frac{1}{2}$  varas are equal to a toise, or French yard, and a vara and 12 dedos to the French ell. In dry measure the caliz has 12 fanegas or 144 celemines; the fanega, 1.599 bushel: the celemine is divided into halves, quarters, etc. In liquid measure there is the botta, equal to 30 arrobas; the moyo, equal to 16 arrobas; and the azumbre, 8 of which (or 32 quartillos) are equal to an arroba. The arroba of wine is 4.245 gallons English; the arroba of oil,  $3\frac{1}{3}$  gallons ditto. These, which are mainly

obtained from the Spanish tables, are corrupted in various parts of the state, each department having its local names, some of which are mixed with the Indian language, the inhabitants of one section scarcely comprehending the terms used in another.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE DEPARTMENT OF OLANCHO, AND THE GUAYAPE OR PATOOK RIVER.—Olancho, though an integral portion of the republic of Honduras, is so far removed from the central government, and geographically separated from the rest of the state, as to have become, in some respects, a republic of itself, being virtually ruled by a number of ancient and rather aristocratic families. The population, centring in the interior table-lands, extends in unnumbered haciendas and pastoral villages nearly to the lowest terrace of the Cordilleras, and consists of a similar distinction of classes as is presented by Central America generally. These comprise the descendants of the early Spanish settlers (who have, perhaps, preserved their purity of blood more rigidly than in any other part of the state); the reduced or converted Indians (a peaceable and industrious race, occupying Catacamas and several smaller towns); the wandering uncivilized tribes inhabiting the mountain solitudes and coast savannas; the Caribs, or Coast Indians, and a considerable number of negroes, mulattoes, and mestizos. The population may be placed at 50,000, about one tenth of whom are whites, six tenths Indians, and the remainder mestizos and mulattoes.

Olancho comprises not far from a third of Honduras. It is considerably larger than the Central American republics of Costa Rica or San Salvador, and is superior to either in the variety of its productions, which may be found enumerated in Chapter XXIX. It extends through three degrees of longitude and two of latitude, embracing about 12,000 square miles of territory, and has not less than 200 miles of sea-coast.

The department is divided from the adjoining one of Yoro by the Poyas, or Black River, and by a line intersecting its headwaters in the valley of Olanchito, and extending in a south-westerly direction to the continuous chain of mountains known as the Salto and Campamento ranges, which also separate it on the west from the Department of Tegucigalpa. These lines are understood in elections as the departmental boundaries; no sur-

veys have ever been made, and the divisions are simply geographical ones. The Wanks, or great river of Segovia, which is also the dividing line between Honduras and Nicaragua, forms the southern boundary of Olancho.

In the interior, the Spanish settlements are divided into the municipalities of Jutecalpa, Santa Maria del Real, Silca, Manto, Salaman, Guayape, San Francisco de la Paz, San Estevan, Gualaco, Yocon, Concordia, and San Cristoval de Catacamas, the jurisdiction of each of which extends over the adjacent villages. The inhabitants are hospitable, and more prosperous than in any other part of the state. Many *hacendados* are wealthy, owning large tracts of grazing ground, and untold numbers of cattle, horses, and mules. I saw in Olancho fewer instances of extreme poverty and beggary than in the other departments of Honduras. The uncivilized tribes are governed by no political organization, and have their own simple laws, with which the Spanish authorities have never attempted to interfere.

The topography and climate have already been sufficiently alluded to. The country is drained by numerous rivers, some of which are the scene of mahogany-cutting enterprises. The principal one is the Guayape or Patook; and as one of the objects of my visit was to ascertain if this could be navigated, a brief abstract of the most reliable information I could collect may prove of interest.

The Guayape (from *guayapin*, an Indian female robe) is the most important river of Olancho, and, after leaving the plateaus of the interior, widens into one of the largest in Central America. It rises in the Campamento Mountains (where it may be traced a mere brook, with the name of Guayapita), increasing in size until it enters the picturesque valleys of Lepaguare and Galeras. Being joined by the Concordia, Chifilingo, Moran, España, and other mountain streams, it winds toward the Camasca hills through a nearly deserted country, and passes the city of Jutecalpa within about four miles, receiving near by the waters of the Rio de Jutecalpa, upon which the city is built. The Guayape here flows through a great plain. Following the base of several ranges that intersect the otherwise level country, it is increased, at a point ten miles below Jutecalpa, by the Ja-



lan, a considerable stream, rising in the mountains to the southward. The river, as far as the mouth of the Jalan, flows among open copses, undulating plains, and small, dome-like spurs, making from the hills down toward its course, and terminating in craggy banks, from which masses of stone have fallen to obstruct navigation. Canoes, however, frequently pass from Jutecalpa up to the hamlet of Aleman, but this route is for the most part disused, there being a practicable road or mule-trail between the two places.

Below the Jalan the Guayape loses its turbulent character, and becomes a silent but swift river, being generally free from rocks in the place where I visited it, and during the rainy season offering apparently an unobstructed navigation for light-draft vessels. In riding along the banks, intervening ranges and impenetrable woods often obliged us to make *detours*, and thus large spaces of the river were not examined; but conversations with the Indians and mahogany-cutters warrant a similar description of the river down to where it is joined by the Guayambre. This conclusion is favored by the Guayape passing for that distance through a generally level country, and being augmented by numerous small rivers.

The distance from the confluence of the Guayape and Guayambre to the Caribbean Sea is stated by Señor Ocampo, who has frequently passed from his mahogany-cuttings to the coast, to be 180 miles. A small manuscript description of the river, written by him at my request, says, "The Guallape is navigable from the confluence of the Guayambre to the sea, a distance of sixty leagues by the '*vueltas del rio*' (river windings). In the season of the rains, we pass with rafts of mahogany from the rivers Jalan and Guayambre into the Guallape, which we continue to call by that name down as far as the Rio de Tabaco, which enters from the south. The river is broad, but has several *chiflones* (rapids), which in summer, during low stages of water, impede navigation from the mouth of the Guayambre to a few miles below the Rio de Tabaco. From this point the river assumes the name of Patook, and below this there are neither dangerous rapids nor sunken rocks, though the river descends with great velocity, often cutting abruptly through hilly and broken country."

From verbal descriptions, I ascertained that the space included between the Guayambre and the Corriente de Caoba is about thirty miles by the windings of the river, and in that space are apparently the only obstructions to navigation between the plain of Jutecalpa and the sea. No falls appear to exist, but rather rapids, resembling those of Machucha and Mico, on the San Juan. These, however, must be exceedingly violent during the floods, when the mahogany-cutters commence rafting their logs. After passing the mouth of the Guayambre, the rafts float for about a mile without hinderance until they approach the *chiflones* of Campaneros, Mangos, and Aguacaliente, occupying nearly a mile of the river. These show several large, high rocks in summer, which are covered during the floods, and here the *pipantes* of the natives are sometimes capsized by getting broadside to the current, while the occupants are attempting to guide the logs through the deep passages. The banks are precipitous and wooded, and the bottom lined with rocks, which the action of the river has undermined and tumbled into its bed. Small steamers, such as are used on the San Juan, might pass without danger, if managed by a skillful pilot.

The Guayape then flows quietly a few miles, when it contracts between precipitous banks, and passes rapidly through what is known as the *Cajon Grande* (Great Box), or *Puerto de Delon*. This place seems to be only formidable to the raftsmen from the velocity of the water. Three miles below the Guayape takes a sudden bend, forming a right angle, the lower bank presenting a face of bare granite, against which the river plunges with great force, and, recoiling, meets the descending current, which creates a violent whirlpool of tossing waves, known as *El Molino* (The Mill), or *Cajoncito* (Little Box). The greatest care is necessary to guide the rafts past these rapids, which Señor Ocampo represents as the most dangerous on the river. He was once capsized here in a *pipante*, and only saved by the skill of his Indian boatmen. He thinks a river steamer would find no difficulty in passing this place. The rivers Gineo and Tabaco fall into the Guayape between eight and ten miles below, and four miles below the mouth of the latter is encountered the *Corriente de Caoba*, or Mahogany Rapids. The river has here acquired a volume which passes the

rafts without danger, and from this point the natives drop the name of Guayape (or Guallape) for that of Patook. The *pipantes*, described in Chapter XIX., are from five to seven days on the route from Jutecalpa to the sea. From sixteen to twenty days are occupied in ascending the river.

The Patook is augmented for the rest of the distance by several rivers, described as sufficiently deep to be navigated by keel vessels. The names of the principal ones taking their rise in the ranges which divide the great plains of the Patook from those of the Wanks or Segovia I was unable to obtain. The two largest flowing from the northward are the Cuyamel and Wampu. The river discharges by two mouths, the principal one being at Point Patook, and the lesser into Brewer's Lagoon. The first is described as having a shallow, sandy bar, through which makes a channel, having in the summer season from five to seven feet, as the violence of the wind and surf cause it to shift, fill up, or deepen, and in the winter or during the floods from nine to eleven. Mahogany traders anchor about half a mile outside the bar to receive their cargoes, and are always prepared to slip and gain an offing should the weather threaten one of the sudden northers peculiar to these regions. It is possible that at spring-tides the water may deepen to fourteen feet on the bar. A volume of water passes out during the floods so great as to discolor the sea for some miles. Captain Countess, commanding his majesty's sloop Porcupine in 1786-7, thus describes the delta: "From Black River to Cape Gracias á Dios we kept along the shore, sounding in from seven to ten fathoms. Off Patook River, which lies at a considerable distance from Black River, we observed the fresh water, where it joined the sea, form a distinct line as far as we could see, being brown and muddy, and had the appearance of a shoal. When in it, we found the water nearly fresh. At the time of this alarming appearance there was a flood in the river." Little is known of the mouth of the Patook; the only persons who, from actual observation, are able to speak of it, are Indians and negroes, or the few Balize traders in mahogany and dye-woods, who have probably never given a thought to the river or the unknown interior whence it flows.

The arm or lesser mouth by which the river discharges into

Brewer's Lagoon is stated to be little inferior in size to the other. For many years a collection of driftwood has formed a permanent raft near where it enters the lagoon. This extends entirely across the river, and sustains a growth of trees and parasitical vines resembling the main land: the Indians haul their canoes across this when bound to the little settlement below. The tide ebbs and flows under it, and at times the whole has been overflowed without disturbing its matted solidity. A plan has been proposed by a number of Balize traders for the removal of this raft, as a free passage into the lagoon would greatly facilitate the transportation and loading of mahogany.

The body of water known as Brewer's Lagoon is separated from the sea by a narrow strip of land and rock scarcely a mile in width. The inlet is about fifteen miles long by five or six wide, and has several small islands, the resort of the coast Indians for fish, which abound among the rocks skirting them. One of these is said to have been originated in the seventeenth century; the anchor of a pirate vessel being left there, it caught the passing driftwood, until, in the lapse of years, it became an island, constantly increased by alluvial deposits. The anchorage is described as good, and the water of sufficient depth to admit vessels drawing ten feet. The channel to the sea is near the "spit" or point, between which and the main land the passage is extremely narrow. Its depth is said to be about equal to that at Point Patook. Brewer's Lagoon might be made a dépôt for commerce with the Spanish settlements, could communication be re-established with the main Patook, and sufficient energy be manifested in the interior to warrant the enterprise.

NATURAL PRODUCTIONS.—A simple enumeration of the best-known woods, plants, and fruits of Central America is perhaps the most comprehensive method of setting forth its vast natural resources, which, with few exceptions, are common alike to each of the states. The subjoined list by no means comprises the rare botanical treasures of Honduras. Specimens of most of those mentioned are now in my possession or have passed under my observation; others have been obtained by personal inquiry, and compiled from the best authorities. The field presented throughout the country, in every department of natural science,



is yet untrodden, and not excelled in America for interest and variety. Forests of valuable woods, and exhaustless indigenous fruits and drugs, remain silent and unclaimed as at the creation.

A short journey from regions teeming with rank vegetation and every tropical product brings the traveler among the fruits of the temperate zone, where, in modest contrast to mangoes, oranges, and bananas, swelled by torrid heats into golden maturity, cluster the less luscious but more familiar peach, cherry, and apple of the North. Here the cereals common to New England rustle their sheaves in the breeze, and gaunt pines and upland oaks, draped in sober habiliments of lichens and moss, sway in the mountain gales.

Every variety of climate, generally avoiding the distressing extremes of each, is included within the limits of Honduras, and here may be cultivated a large majority of the natural productions known to man. At an elevation of 3500 to 5000 feet above the sea, wheat reaches a remarkable degree of perfection. Rice, on the upland plateaus, without submersion, beans, corn, potatoes, squashes, and all garden vegetables, flourish, while the wild rose, morning-glory, and other familiar flowers grow spontaneously, or are cultivated in many localities. The blackberry vine and sensitive-plant clamber among the rocks or spread over the grassy slopes, and the stranger, as he faces the norther that whistles keenly through the gorges of the sierras, can scarcely realize that he is within the tropics, and almost in sight of the region of the palm and plantain, and the green foliage of the coffee, sugar-cane, cacao, and indigo plants. It is here that Nature, robed in her fairest garb, seems to have fascinated the inheritors of her charms into listless inaction with the very excess of beauty.

To the agriculturist, the merchant, the scientific explorer, or the aimless adventurer, Honduras, rich in natural advantages, throws open her portals, and offers to the world a share in those treasures that only wait the magic touch of Industry to reward the labors of all. A brief sketch of the most common productions of the soil, considering in turn the richly-grained cabinet timber of commerce, the precious drugs of the pharmacist, and dye-woods, balsams, and fruits, many of them almost unknown beyond the obscure region of their origin, will partly serve to

illustrate their variety, and perhaps lead to their future special discussion.

TIMBER, AND CABINET AND DYE-WOODS.—Algarbo (hard and red-colored), alcornoque (cork-tree), aguacate (alligator pear-tree), achote (heart-leaved bixa), algodonezo (see ceiba), algagia, almendrillo (almond-tree), amarilla de Guayaquil (both used for building), bamboo (sappan-tree?), barablanca, buttonwood, boxwood, birds'-eye maple, carne tuelo (black thorn-tree), cedro (cedar, black and red), ceiba (silk-cotton-tree, *Bombax Ceiba*), cayelac (sweet-scented wood), caoba (mahogany-tree), cedro espinoso, cedro amargo, cedro cebollo (varieties of a hard, durable wood; not the cedar), cedro pasaya, cedro bueno (varieties of the red cedar), cocolobo, cocobello? (very hard, durable, and beautiful, much used in cabinet-making), cano blanco (used in making laths), cubo, cope (rarely used for building), carbon (charcoal-tree), copal-tree, copaiba-tree, copaljocol (bearing a small, cherry-like fruit), camwood, cacique or macano (very durable), cristobal, chiraca, caray (tortoise-shell-wood), cottonwood, corrotu, ebano (ebony), espinoso blanco, espinoso amarillo, espinoso negro (varieties of the buckthorn), espabé, esquinsuche, encina (evergreen oak), eboe algrova, fustic-tree, guayaco or guayacan (lignum vitæ-tree, *Guaiacum*), guayabilla (wild guava-tree), guapinol, guachipalin (hard and beautifully variegated), granadilla (black, and very hard and durable), guanacaste (very large, and easily worked), guajinijilí, indio desnudo, ijerilla, jisote, juchicopal, lima wood, locust, lechemaria, liquidamber-tree, mateare, maderia negra (used to shelter the young trees on cacao estates), malvecino, mangle (mangrove), mangle caballero (affords good timber), mora (yellow and hard), manzanilla, manzanito, mohoe (or *Althæa*), madroño (wild strawberry-tree), manzanita, madre cacao, madroña de montana, naraco nigrato, níspero (de montaña and real), nazareno (very beautiful), naranquito, palo negro, palo amarillo, palo santo, palo penca (rope-tree), palo de vala, palo de rosa (rosewood), palo Campeche (logwood), palo de Nicaragua (Nicaragua wood, a species of *Brasilita*), paraiso, palma (palm of many varieties), palma Christi, quebracha (or palo hacha, a species of ironwood), quiza (fine-grained and difficult to work), quipo (laurel), roble (oak), ronron (a very beautiful cabinet wood, fine-grained, and striped with

red and yellow), reseda (a species of rosewood), sapodillo, satin-wood, sancuya, Santa Maria, San Juan (red and yellow grained), sumac, sapote, sabina (savin), sumwood, sauce (willow), taray (hard and fine-grained), torro (beautiful, and much used in cabinet-work), tamarindo (tamarind-tree), tiucinte, totuna, ule, or caoutchouc (India-rubber-tree), zebra wood.

**STAPLE PRODUCTIONS.**—Coffee, casava, cacao (cocoa), chocolate, cochineal, cotton, corn, indigo, India-rubber, pita (Sisal hemp or jenican), rice, sugar-cane, tobacco, wheat.

**WILD AND CULTIVATED FRUITS.**—Anona (custard apple), albaricoque (apricot), aguacate (alligator pear), anchovy pear, algodon silvestre (wild cotton or silk), alberchigo (peach, *Amygdalus Persica*), bread-fruit, cocoanut, citron, coroso, chirimoya, cereza (cherry), cayonito, cotoperice, ciruela (nectarine), cidra (a species of aromatic wild lemon), camote, durazno (peach), granada (pomegranate), granadilla (wild pomegranate), guayaba (guava), gineo (banana), guanava (soursop), guacal (mammoth calabash), higo (fig), higuerra (calabash), jocote (wild plum), jicaro (a dwarf calabash), limone, lima (lime), melone, marañon, manzana rosada (rose apple), mamaya (*Mammea Sapota*, mamme-apple), mango, melocoton (in Spanish, the common peach, but applies in Central America to an indigenous fruit resembling a large peach), manzanita (a small acidulous fruit resembling the cherry), mora (local name for the blackberry), membrillo (quince), manzana (common apple), níspero, naranja (orange), olive, ocumo, platino (plantain), papaya (fruit of the papaw-tree), pina (pine-apple of three varieties), pipaya, pera (pear), prisco (species of plum), perone, pitahaya, pejibayo, sandilla (watermelon), uva (grape), vegetable ivory, zapote or mamey (*Zapote Mamey*).

**DRUGS, MEDICINAL PLANTS, AND PRECIOUS GUMS.\***—Aloes,

\* *L'Assemblée Nationale* of October 1st, 1855, in its description of the Great Exhibition in that year at Paris, refers to the botanical collection forwarded by the government and "Sociedad Económica" of Guatemala. The samples were not accompanied by the botanical names, or descriptive marks or notes, but was considered a rare contribution. Of cabinet and dye-woods there were numerous specimens, among the latter the *Capulin cimarron* and the Campeche wood. Among the medicinal plants was the *Polygala*, an ipecacuanha said to have been recently discovered by a native pharmacist; the *Lobelia inflata*, used as a diaphoretic (possibly a species of the *Lophanthus*?), said to be peculiar to Mexico; and a small plant resembling the *Eryngium nasturtifolium* of Mexico. In the collection of

almarcigo (mastic), anata (*Bixa Orellaná*), anota, anis (anise-seed), arrow-root, acluote, agave, amole, amate, achiote (or anotta), ajonjolí (a purge), ario (ditto), bainilla (vanilla), balsame negro (black balsam), balsamito, caoutchouc (India-rubber), copal, cowhage (*Dolichos Pruriens*), copalchí (quinine), cañafistola (cassia), camphor (?), cinnamon, contrayerba (a species of the *Dorstenia* of Linnæus), castor-oil plant, cedron (antidote), citron, caraway, capsicum, chichicasta (species of cowhage), eryngo (antidote), estonaque (frankincense), fustic, foxglove, friagaplata (a purge), gum arabic, gum copaiba, gum copal, gum myrrh, gum tragacanth, gum elastic (ule), gum zacarina,\* ginjebre (ginger), guaco (antidote), guasguas, guachacaré, genesero, Incas sylvestris, ipecacuanha, jalapa, Jesuit's bark, juchicopal, lobelia, liquid-amber, linseed, lona mana,\* mastic, madder, oca, pimento-gordo (allspice), palma Christi, piñon, rhubarb, sarsaparilla, sumac, sassafras, smilax, snake-root, sago, silk-cotton, sangre de drago (Dragon's-blood), tacamahaca, tuna, toronja, vanglo (oil-plant).

gums appeared dragon's-blood and gum elastic ("called *ule*"), quite different from that of Mexico. The heart-leaved bixa (a dye-wood), and some specimens of a fruit or grains resembling nutmegs; the *Myristica sebifera* of Guiana are also mentioned; and a straw, used for the manufacture of cigar-wrappers and hats, called "Panama," like the *Carludivico* of Bolivia.

\* "Don Cosme Mora encontró en el lugar llamado Gualora de la isla del Tigre, un árbol lleno de cierto goma que la expelía en abundancia en su tronco y ramas y habiéndole examinado, encontró que era exactamente mana. Los experimentos que de ella hizo, y el voto de Licenciado Don José Silva que la reconoció, persuadieron al descubridor de que positivamente era la misma goma zacarina, y purgante que nos traen de Sisilia y de la Calabria."—*Golpe de Vista sobre Honduras*.





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